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Number 1
April 1984

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The Cheeseboard

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By Jean Airey

BLAKE'S 7

INTRODUCTORY GUIDE



LIBERATOR'S CREW
CALLY, BLAKE, AVON, JENNA,
GAN, VILA & ORAC

"We're all crazy," one *Blake's Seven* fan recently confessed to me.

A few months ago, in *Fantasy Empire*, I put out a call for *Blake's 7* fans to let me know what was going on with their specific fannish interest. At the World Science Fiction Convention (Constellation) in Baltimore she told me. I had a chance to talk to two of the key fans and activists, Cherry Steffey of Richton Park, Illinois and Deb Walch of Boston, Massachusetts.

Those of you who have just recently started reading *Fantasy Empire* are probably wondering just what *Blake's 7* is, so a bit of background: (not intended to be comprehensive, buy the back issues if you really want to find out about it!).

Blake's 7 is a BBC-TV science-fiction program. It ran for four years in England, was cancelled to loud screams of anguish from the fans and there is presently talk of a revival. (Actually, considering how the Beeb 'finished off' the show, I'd assume that we're talking more along the lines of a 'resurrection'?) In what might seem a contradiction in terms, this is a realistic sf program. The 'heroes' (Blake and his '7', and later, just the '7') are not always heroic. As a matter of fact, most of the time they don't even like each other. That's only natural, since they were originally haphazardly thrown together as they escaped from a Federation prison ship. And, except for Blake, all of them *were* criminals (characteristics they never changed either!)—so heroism is not exactly their motivating force. The Federation and its minions are the 'enemy', but even there it isn't always evil, just tremendously bureaucratic and totally incapable of dealing with the unusual in-



Cherry Steffey and Deb Walch, Blake's 7 supporters.

dividual.

It is, as Cherry and Deb say, "not the normal sort of thing". It's a series where you can never bring to a new episode a preconception that all ends well. It is a series where the key characters—our heroes and heroines—can die. You are under no compulsion to like the characters, but the quality of acting and the *development* of the characters is such that fans get hooked. And if our heroes aren't heroes all the time, well, welcome to the human race! I think it's lovely to be able to watch a fictional character have to consciously decide to be brave—that's realism!

But how do American fans get hooked on a series that isn't seen on American television and isn't being aired even in England anymore? As Cherry and Deb tell it, it isn't easy. Cherry went to Westercon and saw a stuffed beanbag dragon dressed in leather and studs (the regular costume worn by Avon (Paul Darrow)), and she was intrigued by the dealer's description of the character. When she saw a picture of Paul Darrow as the character she was even more intrigued. Deb claims that her real involvement began when she had a concussion and, while still groggy, watched "Sarcophagus" and "Sand". What a way to spend a vacation! Both Deb and Cherry were able to get in touch with British fans through their other fannish interests and started getting B7 fanzines and audio tapes.

Once they got involved, they began

campaigning to get more Americans interested. They prepared an introductory guide to the series, wore buttons at conventions, produced fanzines and collared every *Doctor Who* fan they could find to tell them about the 'new' British sf series.

They each started a *Blake's 7* fan club. Cherry's group is called "Scorpio". Their dues are \$7/year for U.S.A. members, \$11 (air mail) or \$8 (surface) for overseas members. Scorpio membership includes a membership packet (badge and club photo) and a bi-monthly newspaper which includes an episode guide, interviews with the cast and production people, buying guides to merchandise and information about club members' activities as well as news on the dispensation of the U.S. marketing rights. Cherry wrote to me recently to let me know that Scorpio now has over 140 members in the U.S., England and Australia. Just recently, they formed a branch called "Scorpio Northwest" which will hold meetings in the Northwest region of the U.S. and have its own column in the newsletter. Monthly meetings are held in the Chicago area with all members welcome to attend any meeting and guests always welcome. You can get more information about Scorpio by writing to Cherry at SCORPIO, 4064 Appleby Lane, Richton Park, Illinois 60471. Enclose a SASE (Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope) if you want an answer.

Deb's group is called "The Bored

Without Blake(7) Committee". Membership includes a quarterly newsletter (10-12 pages) and a chance to participate in numerous club activities. Dues are \$10/year U.S.A., \$13.50 U.K., \$15 Australia and \$11 Canada. Deb's group is also interested in fanzines. You can get more information by writing to Mary A. Fall, 1 Tufts St., #6, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (and enclose a SASE).

Another club that might interest those of you who like "the British Connection" is the Blake's Seven Appreciation Society "Horizon", based in England. They will accept members from the States. Yearly dues, including postage, are \$9.75. The club secretary, Mrs. Diane Gies, asks that you send "your crossed cheque/postal order/international money order/bank draft made payable to "Pat Thomas" to her at 18 Hold Road, North Wembley, Middlesex HAO 3PS UK". (Urgent note to my editor: What is a crossed cheque?? What is an uncrossed cheque?? Why did the cheque cross the road??)(Editor's note: Check/cheque crossing is an English activity [like punting, only drier]; English folk will know about it—so don't worry!)

Scorpio will be sponsoring a convention this summer. It's called Scorpio II and is dedicated to *Blake's 7*—British media. Preliminary confirmation (pending professional commitments) has been received from Terry Nation (creator of B7 and the Daleks) and Michael Keating.

In the series, Mr. Keating plays a delightful character named Villa. Villa is a thief—and is totally unreformable even with the Federation's sophisticated 'rehabilitation' techniques; he's also a dedicated coward who could well be voted the least-likely man to come through for you in a tight situation. As played by Mr. Keating, Villia is a surprisingly sympathetic character and it should prove most interesting to get to talk to Mr. Keating about his own feelings with the role. Paul Darrow, Gareth Thomas and Brian Croucher have also been asked. The convention will be held August 10-12 at the Hyatt Oak Brook, Oak Brook, Illinois. Besides the guests, planned events include a Dealer's Room, Art Show and Auction, Presen-

tations/Panels and masquerade. Attendance is limited (Hooray!!) and fees are a reasonable \$22 until 6/30/84 when they go to \$25. Supporting memberships—which include copies of the Progress Reports and the Program Book—cost \$7. Write SCORPIO II, P. O. Box 504, Berwyn, Illinois 60402 if you're interested (and, of course, SASE).

One very pleasant thing to see as I talked to these two young women was that not only do they get along together but they are also working in a united effort to get the show on the air over here in the States.

According to Deb and Cherry, Lionheart (the distributors of *Doctor Who* and many other BBC programs) has the US marketing rights but has not yet started a strenuous push to sell the show. There is, they admit, some difficulty for a distributor in deciding how to market a program that only has 52 episodes available. They hope that if *Doctor Who* proves out the market for quality British sf, stations will be interested in *Blake's 7*. They are very quick to point out that *Blake's 7*, in its prime, drew an audience of 12 million against the top-rated *Coronation Street* (a soap opera) in England.

Both Deb and Cherry admit that being a fan eats up "spare" time and money. At the WorldCon, the two groups organized the "Blake Blitz"—renting a table in the dealer's room (and staffing it during the five days of the convention), providing B7 discussion groups, panels and a slide show as well as an Art Show and B7 room parties.

There seems to be a cooperative effort in American B7 fandom to get a wonderful program on the air. It's a grass roots fandom, the kind that brought *Star Trek* back for the third season. Why spend this time, energy and money on something? "That's dedicated fandom," Cherry said wryly. "We're all crazy."

I'm a "crazy" too—and I hope that the dedication of the American B7 fans pays off and that all of us will get a chance to see this intriguing show. Whatever happens, they've got my support. Keep up the good work!



Cherry and Deb have a good time discussing their passion...Blake's Seven.

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Would you be interested in attending a Blake's 7 convention? _____

Additional comments: _____

I want to thank all of you who sent me copies of the article on *Doctor Who* that ran in *Time* magazine. I couldn't help but wonder as I read it: If they can make that many errors in a one page story on a TV show, what are they doing to the news?? When we held

Panopticon West 1983, our publicity department chief ran into a total lack of understanding from BBC Enterprises as she attempted to get some material to use for any professional press people who might decide to do a news report on the convention. Trying to untangle



(Above) Five of the Seven from Blake's 7. (Below) Fans produce art, artifacts and T-shirts to celebrate the show.



the snarl-up—and winding up writing our own (it was easier), we talked to John Nathan-Turner about the situation. It was actually a case of culture-gap. They don't worry about 'press kits' in England, because over

there *everyone* knows the show so they don't have to explain it. We told John that that was not the case over here. Indeed, our experience with news reporters covering sf events is that what they want to write about is anything that can make the fans involved look ridiculous. "The geeks", so to speak. But approaching the press in a professional manner can forestall a lot of bad publicity.

Now, I've been to another type of organization's conventions and, believe me, they've got just as many geeks as does sf fandom. Yet the press always treats them with the utmost respect—in print. But let a reporter come to one of our conventions and it's always the kid with the ray gun and the antennae on his head who makes the paper.

Science Fiction books are regularly making the best seller list in both hardback and paperback, but reporters aren't interested in interviewing the authors. It might be a question of labels. How many of you like to admit

that you're a *Star Trek* fan when you're reasonably sure that the person you're talking to is going to say (disparagingly) "Oh, you're a Trekkie." You begin to feel as though you've been judged and found barely witty enough to sell flowers at the airport! I must confess that the currently prevalent "Whovian" for a *Doctor Who* fan affects me the same way—especially since "Who" in the title is part of the *joke*, not part of the character's name. Obviously other people don't feel that way, or the term wouldn't have caught on. But labels are our way of easy identification, and silly labels tend to make people discount you. Thoughts on this topic anyone?

If you've got questions or comments on the column; or something you think other fans would be interested in, please feel free to write me at 1518 E. Fowler Ave, Tampa, Florida 33612. If you want an answer, please enclose a SASE and be patient, life is very hectic these days!



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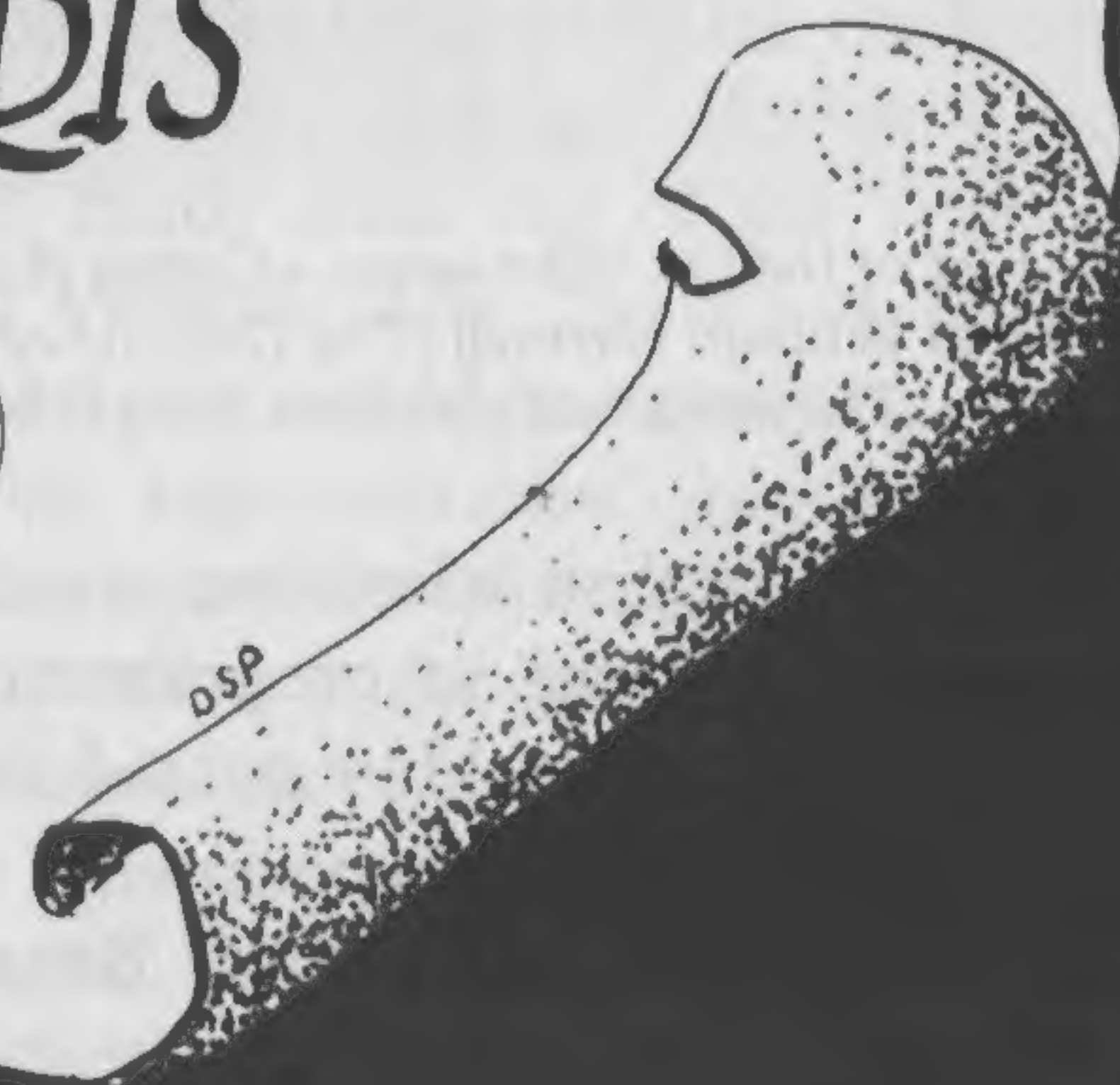
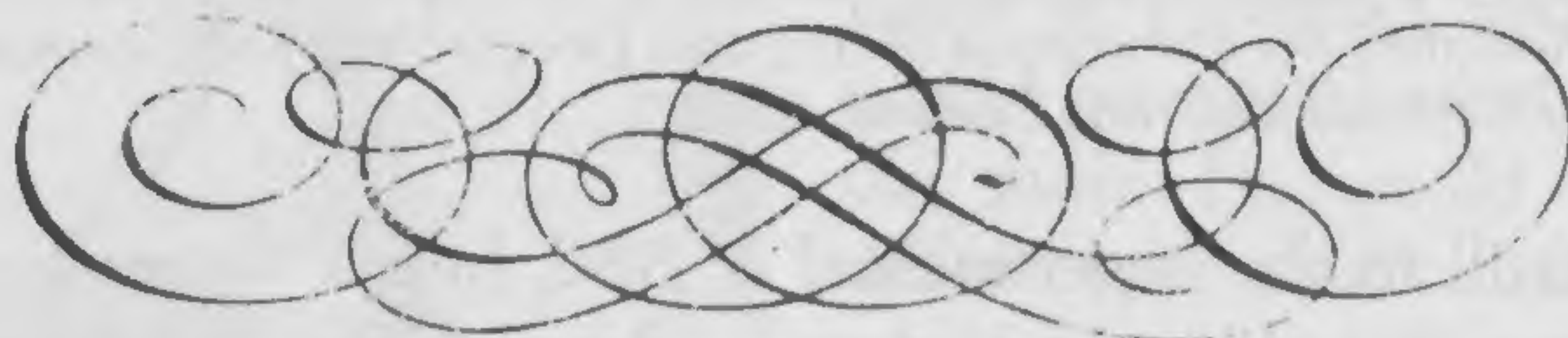


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DOCTOR WHO

IN THE BEGINNING

By John Peel



The cast of the Dr. Who series—Carole Ann Ford (Susan), Jacqueline Hill (Barbara Wright), Verity Lambert (Producer), William Russell (Ian Chesterton) and William Hartnell (The Doctor) celebrating the completion of fifty-two Doctor Who programmes and the fact that the series had been sold to Canada. The series had also been bought by Australia and New Zealand. ©BBC

In 1962, English television was still in the experimental stage when it came to programming. It was a time when almost anything would be considered for the screen, and occasionally the wildest experiments were tried. One of these was originated by the British Broadcasting at one of their planning sessions. At that time, it was the practice for the

BBC heads to get together and thrash out ideas for new shows. The independent TV stations had begun broadcasting. They were scoring successes with filmed series that were also selling to the USA and other countries. The BBC had to hit back to regain what had once been a captive audience when they had been the only channel broadcasting

in England.

One idea that did emerge from these sessions was for a Saturday early evening show aimed at the family. It was to be science fiction, but also had to be educational. The BBC heads saw the education of children as one of their goals. The idea was handed over to Donald Wilson and Sydney Newman to develop.

Donald Wilson spent most of his time in the meetings asking to film John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*. The BBC were very reluctant to do this, though they eventually acquiesced. Under Wilson the series turned out to be one of the biggest successes ever. Wilson had strong leanings towards the historical setting, and wanted to have a fair number of the episodes of the new show set in the Earth's past. Apart from his own love for such stories, it was also very handy for the budget. The BBC Wardrobe Department had a vast range of costumes that could be used in period dramas, but none of use in futuristic or other-worldly settings! To explain why the show would be set in the Earth's past so often, it was clear that there would have to be a strong reason for such visits. It was decided that the lead character would be a time traveller from the 49th Century.

To off-set this interest, Sydney Newman wanted strong sf stories as well. Newman had newly arrived at the BBC from commercial television, for whom he had created the phenomenal success of later years, *The Avengers*. The Canadian born producer has since returned to his native land, having co-created two of the most famous shows on English TV... With him from commercial tv he had brought his secretary, Verity Lambert. With the rough idea fleshed out a little, Verity Lambert was appointed producer of the series.

This was to cause a certain amount of trouble, and necessitated some of the work on the show over the year being done outside of the BBC, due to ill-feeling towards



William Hartnell as The Doctor. ©BBC

Ms. Lambert. Since she had very little practical experience at handling a television show, she had two able right-hand men to help her out. First of these was associate producer, Mervyn Pinfield. Pinfield had a background in the technical side of television, and he helped to create many of the effects and the feel of the show. The other person she was to rely heavily on was her script-editor, David Whitaker.

Whitaker was a very experienced writer and script-editor. He knew a number of the best writers in the field, and could find his way about the BBC and the strange systems that Verity Lambert would have to cope with. Sadly, David Whitaker is now dead; he was one of the major talents in the original show. A good deal of its later success can be attributed to his skill and judgement.

Since her days on *Doctor Who*, Verity Lambert has moved on to other series. *Adam Adamant Lives!* was only reasonably successful, but her recent version of *Quatermass* with John Mills showed better results. She returned to children's work with the strange puppet show *Stainless Steel And The Star Spies* (1980).

Working together, Verity Lambert, David Whitaker and Mervyn Pinfield, along with Australian writer Anthony Coburn, who was to have the writing credit for the first four episodes (actually two interconnected stories, though generally billed as one), made sense out of the very vague ideas of Newman and Wilson. The "hero" of the show would be exactly what no one would be expecting—a nasty old man. He would be argumentative, pig-headed and selfish, with a callous disregard for others. Wild and eccentric, he would also be a student of the past and the alien. He would invariably be the catalyst in a situation that sparked off trouble.

To off-set this character, who would only be known as "The Doctor", the team added a young girl. Originally, she



The unearthly child herself—Carole Ann Ford. ©BBC



Ian Chesterton (William Russell), one of The Doctor's first unsuspecting companions. ©BBC

would be a spacy lady, very trim, odd and very active. When Carole Ann Ford was later cast in the role, the team had her hair cut very short and elfin, to create exactly the right sort of look to her high-cheeked face. At one point in the pilot, she is seen doing strange hand-movements to a radio record to emphasise the alienness of her. She was originally to have been able to defend herself with an alien form of karate, though this was dropped to make her more identifiable to the younger viewing audience (much to the disappointment of Carol).

Using two travellers from the 49th Century meant that there was a need for someone to explain matters to. It was decided to enroll Susan (the young girl) in a school, and that there would be two teachers interested in this "unearthly child". Anthony Coburn suggested that Susan should be the Doctor's grand-daughter, which was universally approved, and that he should not appear until well into the first part of the episode.

There were several severe restrictions on this fledgling series. It was being planned to run for 52 weeks, allowing for short breaks, which would result in 51 episodes actually being filmed, though only 42 would be shown as the first season. The remaining episodes were held over to the second season. The primary problem is that the crew had to work with a budget of two thousand pounds or so per episode. Even in 1963, this was not a lot of money. This limited the

sets possible for each story to six, and the stories had to be constructed about this. Filming was also a big problem as an episode had to be recorded each week. The general plan was that five days would take in all the rehearsals (held in a nearby-church hall) and the actual filming of the episode. With the equipment of the time, it was not possible to shoot in any way except sequentially, and retakes were not feasible. Mistakes would have to be filmed along with the rest.

With such a low budget, whatever device the Doctor and his three companions were to use to travel through time would have to be pretty cheap—and the set would have to be used for a lot of the plot to justify building it. Obviously a "flying saucer" or rocket was out of the question on that kind of budget, so some other method had to be found to suggest time travel. Eventually, it was decided to have the Doctor's ship simply fade out of the present and fade in on the other time or planet. Due to technical difficulties, this effect was not seen until the fifth story, "The Keys of Marinus", and not really perfected until the sixth, "The Aztecs". For the pilot and the first televised episode, a different method was utilised. On the view-screen of the ship, a picture of London would be seen, which would rapidly shrink, to give the impression of a take-off. Then, super-imposed over the faces of the actors would appear the same patterns and noises of the opening theme sequence (minus the music).

When first seen, the time ship was a London Police Call Box, as it could disguise itself to look like anything. Unfortunately, the mechanism to effect these changes jammed, and it remained the same throughout the series to the present. This was primarily done to avoid the expense of showing a new shape for the ship each episode. Susan named the ship the TARDIS, an acronym for Time and Relative Dimension In Space. (Despite this, it is generally said to stand for "Time And Relative Dimensions In Space"—a misunderstanding of the script.) The fact that Susan had named the ship was mostly forgotten in later years, and other time capsules were also called TARDISes.

Despite the fairly normal shape of the exterior of the Tardis, it was decided to make the interior really weird. Verity Lambert and the director for the story, Waris Hussein, met with designer Peter Brachaki to discuss plans. In the center of a large room would be a hexagonal control panel that looked like a controls-covered mushroom. It was filled with controls, levers and gauges that were modern in 1963, but dated now. In the center of the "mushroom" was a large glass column, the Time Rotor. This was to be used to indicate the motion of the craft, since there would be very few other visual clues to the ship moving. Vertical movement in an oscillating fashion would indicate time and space travel. Once the ship had landed, it would spin about its axis as the ship scanned the environment. Within the column were odd shapes and eye-catching vanes. Two separate motors drove the column. Along with special effects created by the new BBC Radiophonic orchestra the Time Rotor would be the pride and joy of the designer.

The rest of the control room was about twenty feet square. Above the control panel hung a huge hexagonal "power source" that glowed as the ship took flight. (This was later

dropped, as it made camera angles difficult.) The walls were inlaid with circular designs, and the room strewn with busts, a couch, an ormulu clock and a hat-stand. One wall was of glass, and behind it was a bank of computers, complete with flashing lights and spinning discs. It was planned to have a second glass wall that would have kaleidoscopic light-play during flight, but money ran out too fast to allow for that.

The unique "take-off" noises were produced by the BBC Radiophonics department. This was still in its infancy at the time, and was producing such odd material as the sounds of Major Bloodnok's stomach on *The Goon Show* (Dick Mills' first job for the BBC!) They released a single called *Time Beat*, a musical number set to a ticking clock (then used between shows on the BBC). The record was not a success, but it was one of the first musical releases in England that was purely electronically produced. For *Doctor Who*, the workers in the Radiophonics department had to invent a whole new field of sounds. Some have lasted through twenty-one years of the show. The Dalek "heartbeat" was first used in "The Daleks" and is still used; the background noises for the petrified forest of Skaro for the same story reappeared in "Destiny Of The Daleks" in 1979.

But the most obvious of all the sounds is the strange, wheezing, moaning sound of the Tardis take-off. This was produced by slowing down the stroking of the bass strings from a grand piano, adding "noise" to create the right kind of crashing and grinding to suggest a sick spaceship taking off!

For such a show as this, the theme would have to be as distinctive as the stories—which meant another job for the Radiophonics. Popular composer Ron Grainer was called in for this. His theme for the police series *Maigret* was particularly haunting, and his music for *Steptoe And Son* crazily distinctive. Since then, the composer produced themes for *Tales Of The Unexpected*, *Paul Temple* and the Charlton Heston film *The Omega Man*. A good collection of his works can be found on *Tales Of The Unexpected* (R.K. Records, RK 1003).

To create the most instantly recognisable of all British TV themes, Grainer wrote the concepts down on normal musical score, suggesting the kind of sound he wanted for the various parts. This was then turned over to the Radiophonics and to Delia Derbyshire, whose job was to actually make the correct sound with the electronics available. First of all, signal generators produced the individual notes of the heavy bass background, which were joined together and then looped to produce the continuous beat. To this the lighter tone of the main theme was added, and then the various little harmonics to produce the end result. The theme was made long enough only to fill the credits, so when the music was released on a record in 1964, it was slightly recast. In the original theme, there was a short "explosion". This was deleted from the music after the pilot, and thus has never been heard on television.

Mervyn Pinfield created the first graphics for the series, based on his background in video. Using a process called "signal howlaround", in which a camera monitors a screen which contains its own image and then forms a feedback circuit, he built upon the add sequence. Starting with a black

screen, a small pencil of white light climbs up the center, to explode (he there then had the "explosion" that was later deleted) into white clouds flying at the viewer. At this point the words "Doctor Who" were superimposed, and these then faded out. In fact, the title sequence contained the word "OHO" instead of "WHO", and the letter W was clearly seen to replace the first O at the start of this portion of the title.

With the basics of the show worked out, what was needed was a cast. The all-important part of the Doctor was first offered to Leslie French. French was born in 1904, and was a veteran of stage, pantomime, movies (including *Orders To Kill* [1958] and *The Singer Not The Song* [1960]) and had frequently appeared on the BBC. He turned the part down, so Verity Lambert returned to her search. After seeing the Richard Harris movie *This Sporting Life*, she was very impressed with the acting of William Hartnell, and was convinced that he would be the right man for the part. Hartnell accepted, and began studying his part. The BBC was convinced the series would last about a year—Hartnell stuck his neck out and predicted five years....

Hartnell saw the part of the Doctor as an eccentric old man, with a fussy style and a love of the past. His Doctor was dressed in Edwardian fashion, wore spectacles from time to time and had long, silver hair. This latter was a wig, though this was hardly ever apparent to the children who watched the show! He wore a thin silk scarf, a cloak and



Carole Ann Ford as Susan was The Doctor's granddaughter. ©BBC

sometimes a Russian-style hat.

For Susan, the Doctor's grand-daughter, a youngster named Carol Anne Ford was chosen. Born in 1940, she was actually 22 when cast as the teenage Susan (she even had a baby, who is now a very pretty young lady, and rather amused by the stir her mother creates at *Doctor Who* conventions). She had appeared in an ITV play, *Man On A Bicycle*, about a carfull of teenagers who accidentally knock down and kill a cyclist. The play then deals with the effects that the accident has on the teens. Carol played a screaming type, and from this part was cast as Susan. Needless to say, she was to do a fair amount of screaming in this new part... She was also to appear in the movies, *The Day Of The Trifids* (1962) and *The Great St. Trinians' Train Robbery* (1966), both times as a French girl. She retired from acting for a number of years, marrying an American and having a second daughter, Tara Louise. Recently she returned to *Doctor Who* to reprise her role as Susan in "The Five Doctors".

First of the two teachers was Barbara Wright, played by Jacqueline Hill. Born in 1931, she started work as a Paris fashion model, but moved to TV action. She guested on a number of shows, but *Doctor Who* was her first series. More recently, she appeared in the BBC Shakespeare

production of *Romeo and Juliet*, and even returned to *Doctor Who* to guest-star in "Meglos" (1980). Jacqueline played Barbara as a sympathetic, caring person, always willing to be involved. She also had a strength of purpose and a streak of stubbornness. She was script-editor David Whitaker's favorite character; certainly in his stories she had a far stronger role than in later days.

To act as counterpoint to the "anti-hero" star of the show, the science teacher, Ian Chesterton, was far more the conventional hero. Brave, adventurous and arrogant (at least at the start), he was played admirably by William Russell. Born in 1924, he first came to prominence in the commercial series *The Adventures Of Sir Lancelot*. This series was shot mostly on location and filmed. Well-made, it sold to the USA, where it was shown on NBC in 1955-57 and ABC in 1957-58. After leaving *Doctor Who* he became the president of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA), from which he returned to acting. He appeared in the TV series *Disraeli*, and in the films *The Duelists* and *Superman*. In the recent screening in the U.S., footage that was lost to the cutting room was restored to the film, and William Russell can be briefly seen as one of the Kryptonian elders.

The casting was complete, and work was begun on the pilot for *Doctor Who*. Unlike American pilots, this was



introduction to the groaning roar that we know nowadays. The teachers and Susan fall unconscious, and even the Doctor is staggered.

The Tardis materialises on a bleak, wind-swept landscape, and a shadow falls across the camera's point of view as the end titles roll, initially over the picture.

With this pilot, mistakes and all, the production team approached the BBC for permission to continue the series. Agreement was given, though several changes were made to the story. The Doctor's character was mellowed considerably. He was still impatient and irritable, but less actively nasty. His speech patterns were toned down also. He ended up by no means likeable, but still far nicer than he was in the pilot. The explanation of the Doctor's origin was also changed somewhat.

The pilot took one day to film at the BBC's Lime Grove Studios, and cost two thousand pounds. The graphics and the music were dubbed in a week later. Two versions of the interior Tardis sequences were filmed for the pilot. There was little difference between the two beyond minor dialog and camera angles.

WILLIAM HARTNELL (1908-1975)

William ("Billy") Hartnell was born in London, and educated at the Imperial Service College. Originally a jockey's apprentice, he changed to acting, first taking to the stage in 1924 in Sir Frank Benson's touring company, with which he stayed for two years. After touring Canada in the play *A Bill Of Divorcement*, he made his first London stage appearance in March, 1932 in *The Man I Killed*. He had taken his first film role in 1931, and from this point onwards concentrated mainly on films. In the 1950s he switched to TV work, appearing first in *The Army Game* before later making his greatest impact as the first actor to play *Doctor Who*.

He married Heather McIntyre, a delightful lady who still attends *Doctor Who* conventions in England, and is most pleased that he should be best recalled for this part, which was always one of his favorites. In the Second World War, he served with the Royal Armoured Corps, before being invalided out. A voracious reader, he also enjoyed riding and fishing in his spare time. Dressed as the Doctor, he would frequently visit children's hospitals to cheer up the patients. He was very fond of children.

His film roles tended to stereotype him either as a petty criminal or as an army sergeant. He did occasionally get lighter roles. Films include:

- 1933: I'm An Explosive
The Lure
Follow The Lady
- 1934: Seeing Is Believing
The Perfect Flaw
- 1935: Swinging The Lead

- While Parents Sleep
- 1936: Nothing Like Publicity
Murder At Madame Tussauds (also listed as "Midnight At Madame Tussauds")
- 1937: Farewell Again
- 1939: Murder Will Out
They Drive By Night
Flying Fortress
Sabotage At Sea
Too Dangerous To Live
- 1940: They Came By Night
- 1941: Suspected Person
- 1942: The Peterville Diamond
- 1943: The Bells Go Down
The Dark Tower
Headline
- 1944: The Way Ahead
The Agitator
- 1945: Murder In Reverse
- 1946: Strawberry Roan
Appointment With Crime
Odd Man Out
- 1947: Temptation Harbour
Brighton Rock (US: Young Scarface)
- 1948: Escape
- 1949: Now Barabbas
The Lost People
- 1950: Double Confession
The Dark Man
- 1951: The Magic Box
- 1952: The Holly And The Ivy
The Ringer
The Pickwick Papers
- 1953: Will Any Gentleman?
- 1954: Footsteps In The Fog
- 1955: Privates Progress
Josephine And Men
Doublecross
- 1956: Tons Of Trouble
- 1957: Hell Drivers
The Hypnotist
Yangtse Incident (US: Battle Hell)
- 1958: On The Run
Carry On Sergeant
- 1959: Shake Hands With The Devil
The Mouse That Roared
The Night We Dropped A Clanger
The Desperate Man
- 1960: And The Same To You
The Jackpot
Piccadilly Third Stop
- 1962: Tomorrow At Ten
This Sporting Life
- 1963: Heavens Above!
The World Ten Times Over
To Have And To Hold

PAVING THE WAY FOR E.R.A. *THE AVENGERS*

Fashions and Fads Changed Clothing And Attitudes

By David Caruba

In 1961, *The Avengers* first appeared on British television. The program would be one of England's top five shows for the next eight years. The show involved the tongue-in-cheek adventures of a dapper super sleuth, John Steed, and one of his various partners who changed periodically over the long course of the show.

The Avengers inspired changes in the British film industry. These changes included the views of television producers and directors on matters of casting and characterization. The show also successfully shattered the myth that a spy action series requires a large budget to cover the special effects.

The Avengers' influence went beyond

All Avenger photos
copyrighted by ITV



the film industry as well. The show caused changes in the British world of fashion. Many of the lead characters' wardrobes became popular dress styles that were sought after throughout the mid- to late-sixties.

One of the show's major impacts was that of attitude toward women. The original series did not feature a female co-star. Ian Hendry portrayed Steed's partner, Dr. David Keel. After the first



Steed (Patrick Macnee) dressed even more elegantly than usual serves Mrs. Peel (Diana Rigg) a more refreshing punch than she is accustomed to. Mrs. Peel (Diana Rigg) showed a woman could be assertive and remain attractive.

year, Ian Hendry left the show and the producers were left with the problem of finding Steed a new partner. "Then Sydney Newman, one of the producers, came up with the original idea of giving Steed a woman partner. But this wouldn't be an ordinary woman. She'd use her brains, make decisions and share the action. The character turned out to be a widowed Cathy Gale, portrayed by Honor Blackman" revealed Adrienne Foster in *Welcome Back, Steed*.

In *Starburst* #13 Richard Hollis explained Honor Blackman's character by saying that Cathy Gale had a tougher image than most other female characters on TV and was more capable of looking after herself. Patrick Macnee summed up his opinion of his unique partner by stating that Honor Blackman played the role of Cathy Gale with the authority of women's equality and she was the first person to do it in a popular medium according to *The New Avengers Magazine* in 1977.

After two years with the show,

Honor Blackman decided to leave. Diana Rigg replaced her, as a widowed Emma Peel. Much to the producer's relief, Emma Peel not only continued to uphold the role of a thinking, acting woman, but also surpassed the popularity of Cathy Gale. "The part of Emma Peel made it possible for women to be more aggressive without being unfeminine. She was a real E.R.A.'er." contends Martin Zeitschik.

CLASSLESS APPEAL

The appeal of Mrs. Peel reached all classes of British society. Joseph Koch, a comic dealer, stated why Mrs. Peel has such an impact on himself as well as millions of other *Avengers* followers when he said, "(Mrs. Peel) rescued lots of men and, more importantly, she rescued women from their usual thriller roles of clumsy hostages, hysterical victims and untrustworthy witnesses. She was capable, self-reliant and intelligent." (TV Book, 1977).

When *The Avengers* first began, the

biggest question on the producers' minds was how well the male/female team of John Steed and Cathy Gale would do in marketing terms. Adrienne Foster commented on the outcome of this problem. "The idea was good, sensational, and best of all, successful. Gale turned out to be one of the most popular women in England, and her adventures with the now developed John Steed were delightful."

As noted by Richard Hollis, *The Avengers* was one of the most successful British flag series, sold in approximately one hundred and twenty world markets. Martin Zeitschik, an authority on the program, points out that the show had a particularly strong appeal to women between the ages of eighteen to forty-nine, pre-teens and teens.

The use of tongue-in-cheek, which is a particularly British style of humor, helped *The Avengers* become one of the most popular shows that ever appeared on British television. This type of satire is the use of a particular situation to make a subtle pun.



In "Mission Highly Improbable" Steed shrinks to doll size.

In *TV Guide*, Cleveland Amory described one such situation that occurred between Steed and Mrs. Peel. "At one point Mr. Steed comes bursting in to tell Mrs. Peel that he has been murderously attacked by a savage. 'Fortunately,' he says, 'he overlooked my cucumber sandwiches.' 'Oh,' says Mrs. Peel, taking one, 'good.' Such scenes stick to your ribs, they do."

Tongue-in-cheek allowed writers to cover up assassinations and killings, making the show acceptable to the audience. An average episode of *The Avengers* may have as many as eight to fifty deaths in it. Normally this would be considered grotesque by the viewers. Since *The Avengers* didn't pretend to be "real", it allowed the audience to ignore how many people died in a single episode. In fact, the more, the merrier!

UNUSUAL GIMMICKS

Certain aspects of *The Avengers* style began to become better known. Adrienne Foster comments that the show became popular for a lot of unusual gimmicks. There was a use of a woman partner, cute little sub-titles after the episode's name, and catchiest of them yet—Steed's different ways of informing Mrs. Peel they have some work to do. She'd often find the phrase "Mrs. Peel, we're needed" in the most awkward places and situations.



Honor Blackman's wardrobe brought out the animal instincts.

When questioned about this style, Martin Zeitschik noted, "In tongue-in-cheek, the horror of death was taken out of *The Avengers*. Without it, *The Avengers* would have been torn up by the censors. Every five minutes, people were dying. The deaths were treated like fantasy—unreal. Whenever someone died, you expected them to stand back up! Tongue-in-cheek made it light-hearted—almost like a comedy."

One of the finer aspects of *The Avengers* was their use of inexpensive specialty props and costume design to double for elaborate special effects

that the show's budget could not afford. The single most used prop was Steed's umbrella. Martin Zeitschik points out that, in certain episodes, it was a camera, a sword, tape recorder, ejected knock-out gas and also protected him from the rain!"

A typical episode was "Mission Highly Improbable", that tells of a foreign power stealing top-secret weapons, such as tanks, by miniaturizing them and then smuggling them out of the country as toys. Steed is trapped inside one of the tanks when it is shrunk and finds himself in a difficult predicament. Robert Jones devised a seventy-two foot long fibreglass desk and an enormous telephone (that actually worked) for this episode.

For "Death's Door", they used vaseline on the edges of the lenses to give

an illusion of a death-like state. The big calendar was an oversized prop. In "The See-Through Man", to achieve a headless effect, the actor who was five foot two inches tall wore clothes that were five eight. His head was where his stomach would normally be. He could look through his wardrobe.

Richard Hollis describes how the director of the episode "Winged Avenger" used actual drawings to film one of the most famous sequences ever to appear in an *Avengers* episode. "A fascinating scene during the episode showed the camera close in on the



The New Avengers starred Macnee, Joanna Lumley and Gareth Hunt.



Honor Blackman was the first Avengers girl.

opinion when asked to evaluate *The Avengers*: "They were unique and way ahead of their time."

WOMEN'S FASHIONS

Another of the major achievements of *The Avengers* was how the show changed British fashions. In 1963, Patrick Macnee designed a leather fighting suit for Honor Blackman's character. The leather suit caused a revolution in women's fashions that became known as "kinky". Patrick Macnee commented on Honor Blackman's costume in *The New Avengers Magazine*: "I was the first to suggest to Honor that

she dress Cathy Gale in 'kinky' black leather, and how good she looked in this overcoat lined with black and white civet."

Reporter's were constantly covering stories about Honor Blackman's (and indirectly Patrick Macnee's) "kinky cult". Anthony Carthew wrote one of the more outspoken statements when he reported, "Mr. Macnee, who is as foppish and witty a fellow off screen as on, has thought hard and long about this leather business. He says: 'Honor's fighting suits outline the figure and show up the highlights in a way no other material can. It is like an animal's skin. My theory is that man, as a hunter, wants to get at the meat underneath.' To this Miss Blackman replies, 'Nonsense'—though instead of that word she uses one more likely to raise a blush in the locker room of a girl's hockey club." in the *London Sunday Times*, March 1st, 1964.

When asked if he knew that the leather suit would cause a revolution in fashions at the time, Macnee replied "it was not until later that I discovered that the whole skin-and-leather fetish was a basic primitive erotic. But at the time that I made the suggestion to Honor I honestly did not know that I was hitting on a well-known subterranean deviation."

During the winter of 1963, Honor Blackman's "kinky" fashions sold like crazy. Writer Anthony Carthew claimed that part of its success was due

(newspaper strip) drawing of the Winged Avenger, then the scene melted into an identical live-action scene. In 1970, editor Dez (Skinn) interviewed the late Frank Bellamy concerning this sequence. Frank explained how he'd been given a blow-up of the live-action frame and was asked to (along with various other drawings) convert the photo into a black and white comic strip picture. When done, it was run before the live-action shot to give a stunning and unique effect." (*Starburst*)

These were the main changes caused directly in the British film industry by *The Avengers*. Many of these changes were adapted by American television series such as *The Wild, Wild West* and *The Girl From UNCLE*. Patrick Macnee expressed the following



Diana Rigg's Mrs. Peel became popular worldwide.

to the somewhat menacing effect given off by the leather suits. He also stated in his article that "Miss Blackman is also the major reason for the cult of leather boots, known universally as 'kinky' boots, which has held British women in its thrall this winter."

Cathy Gale was not the only Avenger to cause a revolution in fashion. Steed, Avenger-in-chief, set a standard of clothing for the well-dressed man. When *The Avengers* first began, Patrick Macnee felt that his wardrobe was not holding up to his character. He decided to redesign Steed's entire look. Writing in *TV Guide* Robert Musel commented that "after the first run through of the show, something seemed lacking. Macnee decided that the larger-than-life figure he was portraying was diminished by an ordinary wardrobe. He got himself an ultra-Edwardian rig that included: curly-brimmed bowler, braided pin-striped suits, embroidered waist-coats, cummerbunds and a furled umbrella. This not only made the role, it has influenced men's fashions."

Cleveland Amory, a reviewer for *TV Guide*, commented on Steed's bowler and brolly: "Mr. Steed wears a bowler with which he can knock you flat, and carries a brolly which doubles as a billy. (You don't know what a brolly is? What are you, an American or something?)"

Patrick Macnee does not like to give out how he went about making his wardrobe that won world fame. He states that although it flatters him that he caused change in British fashion, it doesn't affect his private life. He proudly states that at home he is a beach bum!

Diana Rigg also caused some changes in British fashion, although none as well-known as Macnee's or Blackman's. "Diana Rigg dressed Emma Peel in unusual pants and jump suits," insists Adrienne Foster. Diana Rigg's jump suits were her major contribution to the world of fashion.

Although the kinky cult is no longer as strong as it was in the early sixties, like all of the changes in fashion inspired by *The Avengers*, it can still be seen occasionally on television today. What makes *The Avengers'* fashions



The tongue-in-cheek dialogue and easy-going relationship between Steed and Peel made *The Avengers* work

unique is that they inspired big-name movies like *Goldfinger*, in which Honor Blackman stars in her leather suit.

originally in England and thereafter around the world.

Attitudes towards the role of women in society were affected by the unique characterization portrayed by Steed's female partners and even fashions were adopted as a result of the costuming on the show. More importantly, the production values initiated and innovated by the program had an impact on programs later produced, proving that fantasy and action-thriller drama could be combined to provide high-quality entertainment.

HARD TO DISMISS

While it is easy to dismiss a television program, particularly one that dealt in "spoof" and adventure, as being only light, inconsequential entertainment, the facts reveal that *The Avengers* had a significant impact on its audiences,



Diana Rigg as Mrs. Peel proved herself in excellent shape to handle all the stunts required of her.

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GAMES

THE ADVENTURES OF LEGIONNAIRE BEAU PEEP

Great Britain's Answer To The French Foreign Legion By John Peel

As everyone knows, the French Foreign Legion was a place where men were men, Arabs were vicious and the desert was the enemy of all. The men who joined the Legion joined to forget, and were forged by the sand, the heat and the foes into the crack fighting force of all time. Who can forget the heroism of *Beau Geste*? Now, following in these legendary footsteps, pitting his wits (?) and skill (?) and his courage (???) against all of these (but mostly against *Beau Geste*) comes—Bert Peep.

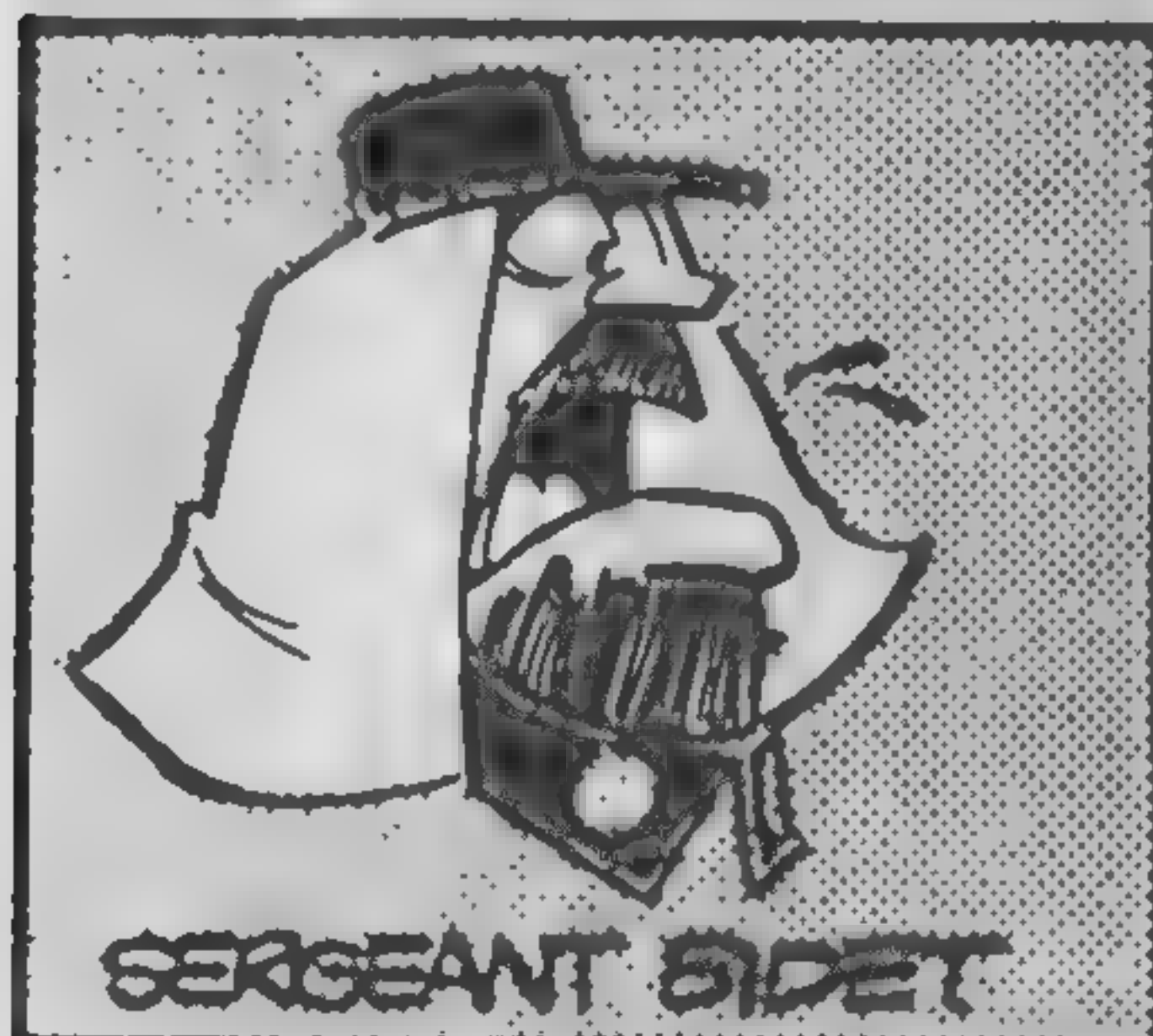
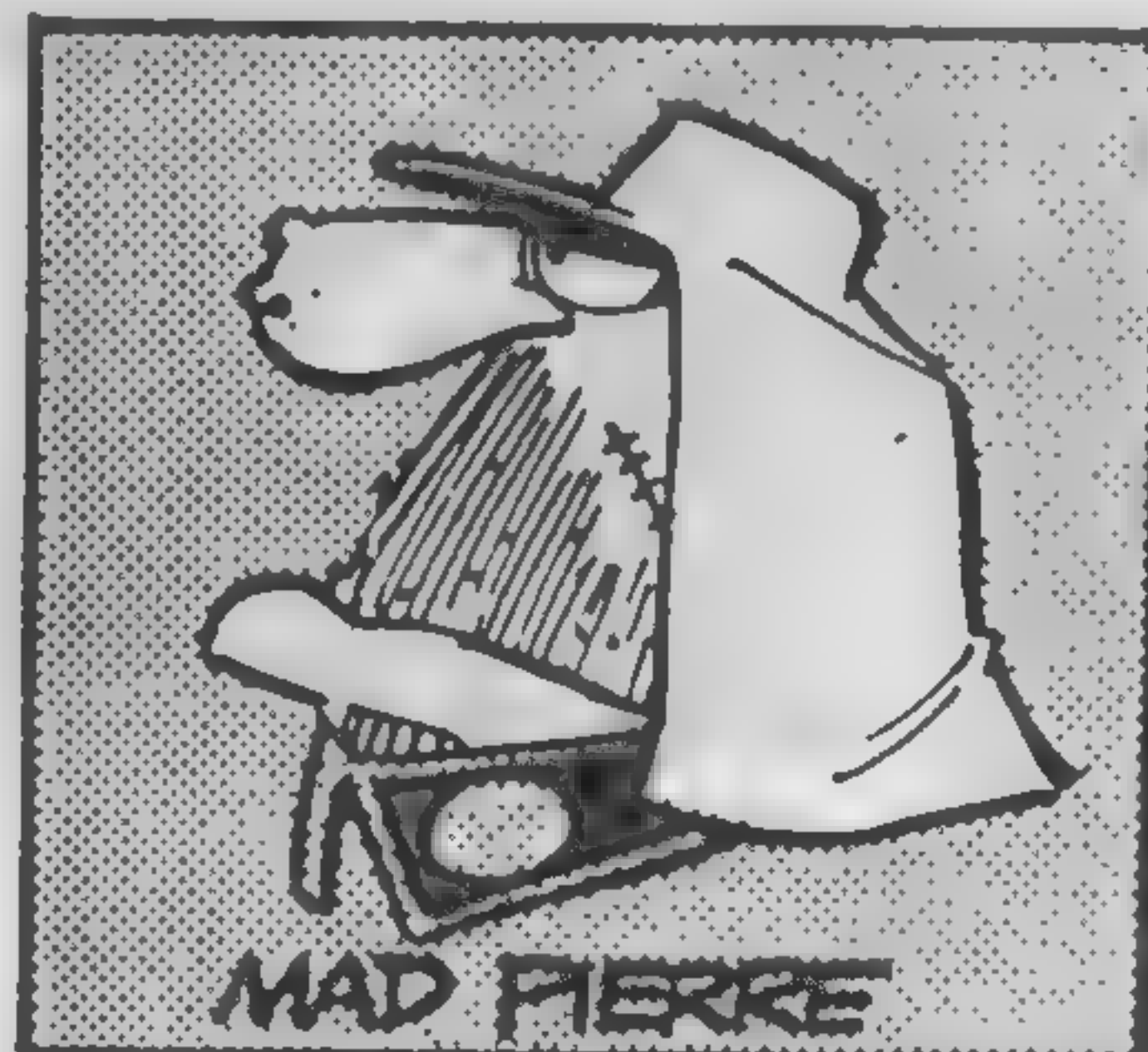
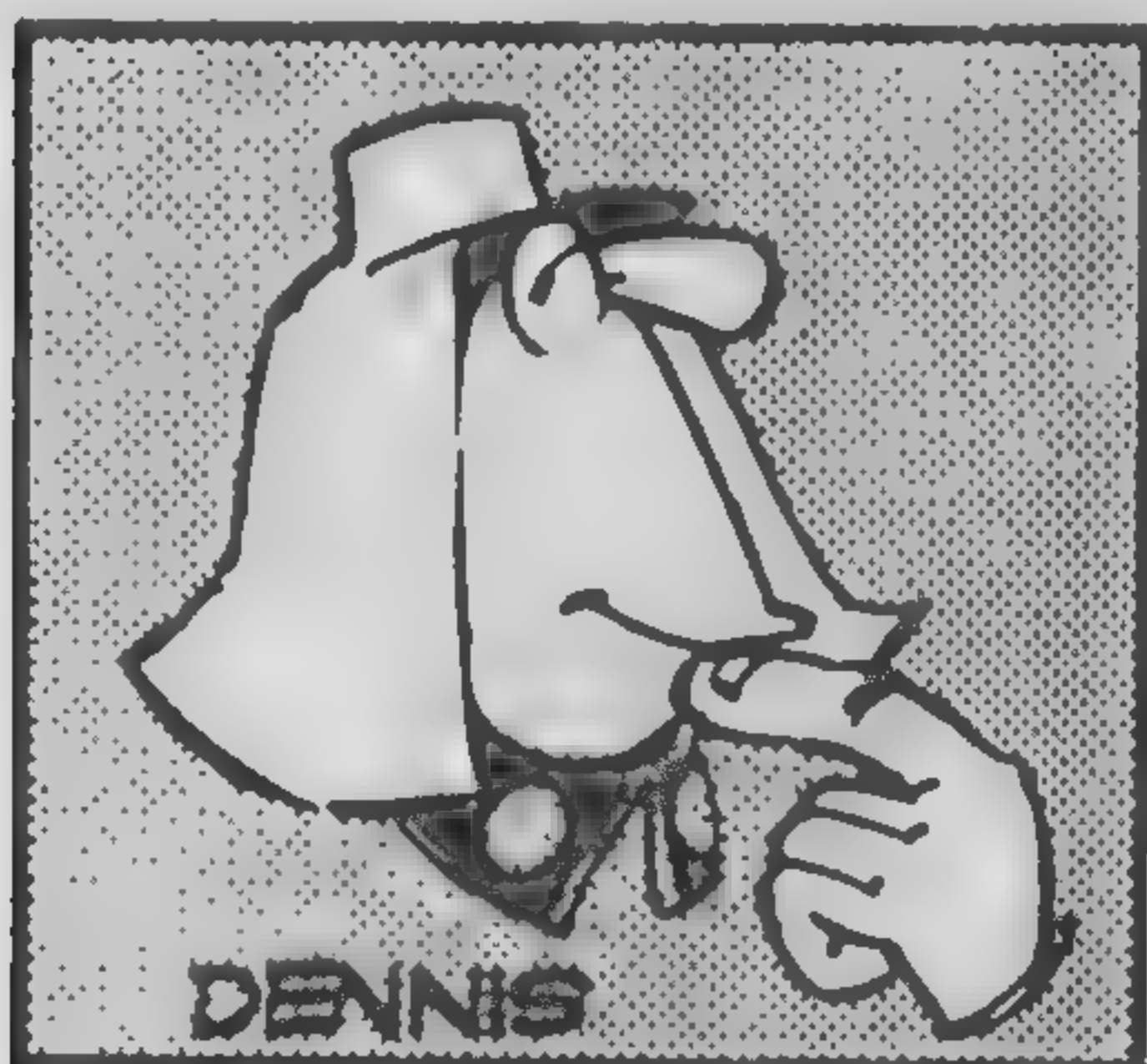
The British comic strip is read and produced by and for a different kind of

reader than the American one. The average newspaper over here might contain anything from twenty on up of such strips: most British newspapers contain five or less. Mostly, these are home-grown products like *The Perishers* or *Andy Capp*, or even *James Bond* and *Modesty Blaise*. Occasionally, they may be American strips, notably *Peanuts* (in the *Daily Mail* for many years) or *Star Trek* (the same paper for a far shorter time). Though the strip is obviously not as important to an English newspaper as it is to an American one, they are frequently loved very fiercely. Many papers regularly produce collections of such strips that sell well.

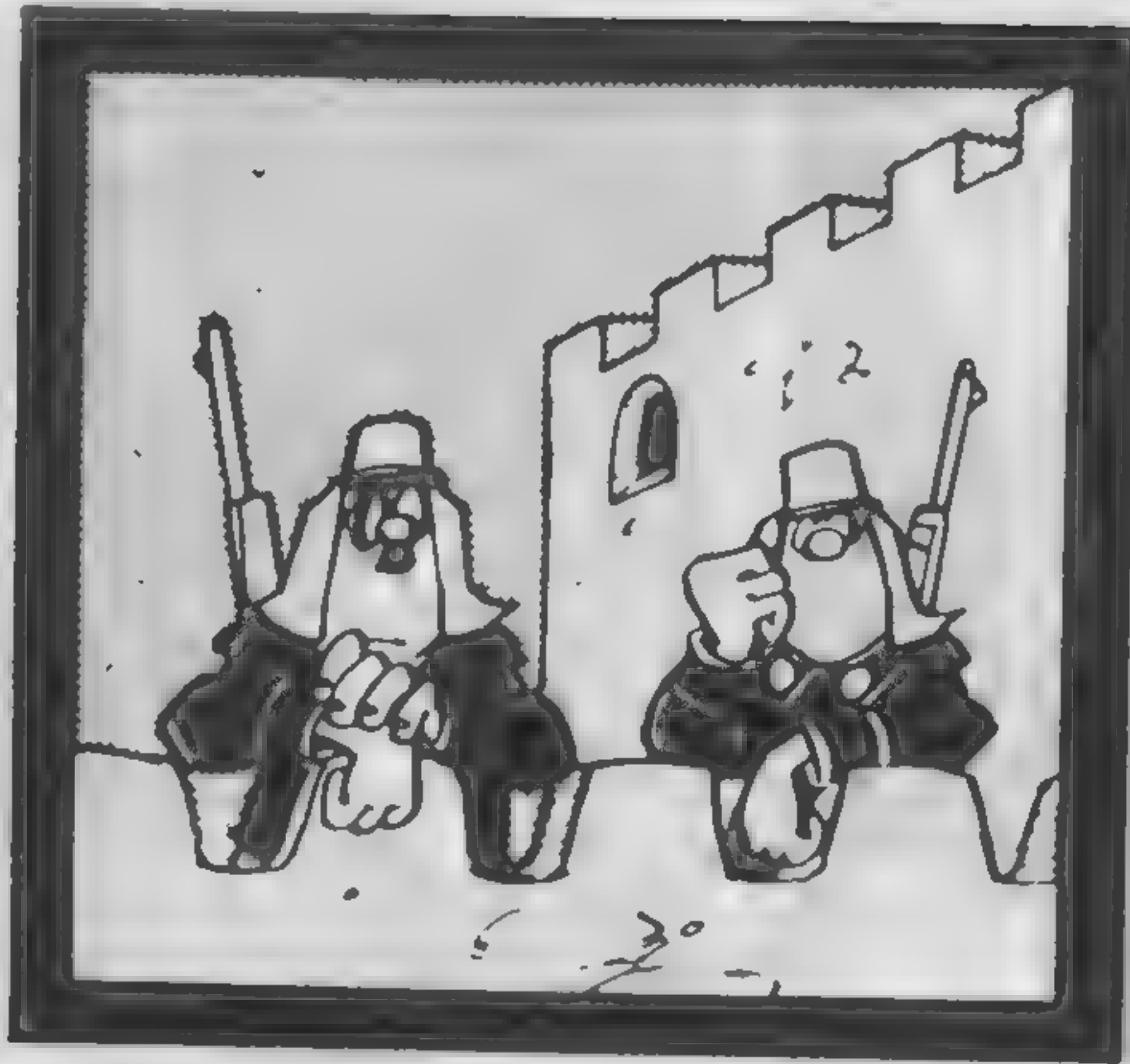
When a new paper comes onto the scene, it aims to draw in the strip reader by offering a bright new strip whenever possible. With the launch of the *Daily Star* in the late 1970s, we were treated to the newest and bright-

test of such strips—the adventures of *Beau Peep*. The strip was created by writer Roger Kettle and artist Andrew Christine, two young Scots, and proceeded to send up all aspects of the mythology of the French Foreign Legion.

First of all, there's Bert Peep, better known to his—well, friends might be too strong a word—fellow troopers as Beau Peep (yes, that's one of the worst jokes in the strip; the other, which we might as well get over with now, is that his camel's name is Sopwith). Bert joined the Legion to forget a girl. Well,



The cast of characters are unpredictable, entertaining, grimy and often incompetent. ©Daily Star/Roger Kettle/Andrew Christine



he thinks she was a girl. Her name is Doris, and she's promised to remain true to him. Peep is still trying to forget that threat.

How to describe Peep? Well, his main characteristic is abject cowardice. Or maybe it's abject failure. Any way, he's a pretty disgusting specimen, and the Foreign Legion is not proud of him. He's thin, weedy, stupid, scheming, drunken and a born malingerer—and those are his good points. Several of these failings of his are the subject of running jokes, such as his search for the perfect wine. Anything that is alcoholic is fine with him, but he's running

an illegal still making shoeshine wine. (No, that's not a mistake for "moonshine"—he feels that boot polish adds something to the flavor of the wine. He's probably right, but it isn't something I'd care to try myself.) Alternating with that are the weekly trips to the nearby bar to get totally plastered with his friend Dennis.

Oh yes, Dennis. Well, Dennis is so bad, he even makes Peep look good. Incompetant is a mild way of describing this boy; his IQ is expressed in negative figures. He not only cannot fire a gun, he still isn't sure which end of it is the working part. Actually, it's pro-

bably not his fault he's so stupid—he'd blame it on heredity (if he knew what the word meant). His mother is just as dumb as he is, and is forever sending him useful presents to help him in the desert—like woolly scarves and ear-muffs. Well, perhaps he is a bit stupider than she is—he wears them.

One can't help pitying the commander of the fort, Colonel Escargot (yes, the French word for "snails"; this is a French Foreign Legion Post, after all). Well, you might pity the Colonel if he weren't so dumb himself. Near-sighted and not overly bright, he is fond of





telling his troops that "we have good news and bad news." "The bad news" he tells his men one day, "is that we can expect an attack from Shiek Ratel and his men any day. The good news is that I managed to find my cuff-link." Oh, in case you're wondering, the Sheikh has an ally, a Taureg called Rol. (Sheik Ratel and Rol.....)

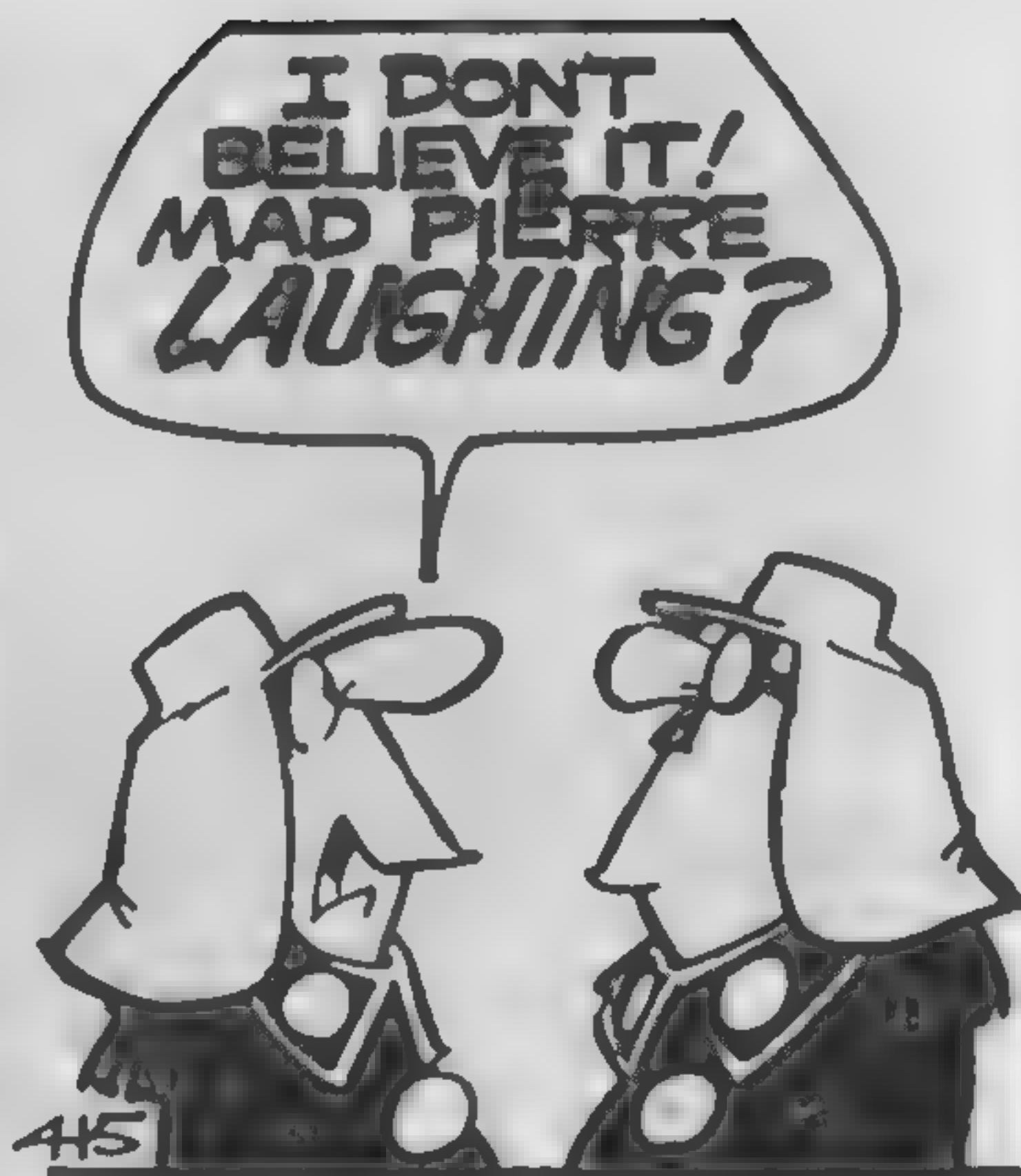
In charge of training and discipline is Sergeant Bidet (look it up if you don't know what that word means!). He's tough, heroic, fearless, unshaven—everything that a legionnaire is supposed to be. And he is frequently reduced to tears by Peep and Dennis. Despite his

best attempts, Peep is a failure; Peep can hit a wall when he's aiming at a target—but not twice in a row. The Sergeant is frequently having to devise new ways of disciplining Peep, such as burying him up to his neck in the sand, making him take twenty mile hikes through the desert with his pack full of rocks and other delightfully humane punishments. He'd probably be driven to drink—if Peep and Dennis hadn't drunk it all first.

Then there's the character who strikes terror into the heart of every man in the Legion. No, not one of their foes, one of their fellow legionnaires, Mad

Pierre. Mad Pierre is the Hulk without the jolly green skin—or the Hulk's sensitivity. Mad Pierre's favorite sport is maiming people. Sometimes the enemy, but usually his fellow legionnaires, simply because they're closer. He doesn't talk much (mainly because it takes too much mental power), but he feels that actions speak louder than words. Actually, his actions *are* probably louder than words, judging by the sound effects when he smacks someone's nose out through the back of his face. Mad Pierre likes to win, and isn't above cheating. When Peep plans on winning the Annual Cockroach Race





by training his cockroach to kill the opposition, Mad Pierre wins the race with his roach through the simple expedient of eating Peep's....

Also at the fort is the cook, Egon. Actually, Egon never wanted to become a cook ("Don't worry," Peep consoles him, "you never did!"). But fate has brought him to the fort, where he makes the lives of everyone a misery by making them guess what's coming

for dinner. Of course, he doesn't make it *too* easy for them to guess; his custard has peas in it, for example. Still, the life of the legionnaires is never dull—they can bet on what the food they're eating is. The trouble is, most of the time, no one *can* guess. Egon is actually surrounded at all times by a horde of admirers... all the flies in the fort.

Actually, despite all that I've said, life at the fort isn't all fun and games.

There's the enemy to fight. You know, the fellows in turbans and burnouses, who are wise in the way of the desert, and know a thousand and one ways to kill a man or to eat sheep's eyeballs. Well, most of them, that is. Naturally, the enemy has a failure too, and it is only natural that Peep should meet up with that one.

Known only as The Nomad, this large-nosed individual was banished from his tribe. The only way he will be readmitted is if he brings back the head of an enemy warrior. Guess whose head he's after? There are, of course, problems. Peep is rather attached to his head, and feels that he'd rather hang onto it, thank you very much. So the Nomad is forced to resort to subterfuge. The problem is that his heart isn't really in being an Arab; he always wanted to be a cowboy. And he never could understand the lore of the desert. "Life to a camel is two scarabs in the wind" is one proverb he quotes to Peep. "It puzzles the hell out of me too," he admits.

Most things puzzle the hell out of this cast of assorted nuts. Shaken together, they provide a very odd sort of rampant insanity that is fresh and delightfully crazy. The adventures of "the Legionnaire who takes over where Laurel and Hardy left off" are frequently—um—risque (there's Dennis' sole talent—he can do finger shadows of dancing strippers). They are always unexpected. And they are generally very, very funny. *Beau Peep* is one of the newer of the comic strips, but it is also one of the very best. Though Peep would probably not approve of the sentiment, we can only hope that he continues his stint in the legion for a long, long time.



THREE DOCTORS

Portraits of the first Doctor, William Hartnell (Top), the fourth Doctor, Tom Baker (Bottom Left) and the third Doctor, Jon Pertwee (Bottom Right) are by talented fan artist, Gail Bennett, Copyright ©1982 Gail Bennett. Characters ©BBC



Author of the fabulous **SECTOR GENERAL** novels

JAMES WHITE

FUTURES PAST



"James White is saying, among other things, that if creatures as widely different as a four-ton elephant-like octopus and a human being can get together on something as delicate as an operation, then how ridiculous it is that two human beings from the East and West who have everything in common except the sounds of some words in their language cannot get together on something as crude as plans for not blowing up the world."

—Richard H. Tyre

Suspended in space Sector 12, midway between our Galaxy and the Greater Magellanic Cloud, lies Sector General. This is a huge, multi-species hospital, over 50 cubic miles in volume, with many hundreds of different kinds of environments in it, because it is a place where specialists of all known life forms take on the strange, the unique and the deadly diseases and problems that any kind of alien life form may encounter. It has 384 levels and a staff of over 10,000 that range from crystalline, delicate creatures to six-legged elephantine intelligences. Some of the staff are even Earth-human. It is a creation that

spans five books and a further two short stories and is possibly the greatest creation of a wonderfully gifted Irish SF writer, James White.

Born April 7th, 1928 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, James White continues to live there to this day. "I am non-racist, non-sectarian, non-violent and an optimist despite living in Belfast's Andersonstown district, and I hope I am too old or too stubborn to change these sentiments." In 1943, he started as an apprentice in a tailor's shop, where he worked for twenty years, eventually managing it. For eight years, he worked at Shorts Aviation,

By John Peel

"Imagine trying to analyse a patient whose sub-conscious mind goes back fifty thousand years...!"

writing publicity, before retiring from those distractions in 1968 to simply write. In his teens, he was a science fiction fan, contributing art and articles in various fanzines, but his first actual sale wasn't until 1953. Thereafter he worked away on short stories, punctuated by various novels, his first, *The Secret Visitors*, being printed by Ace Books in 1957. He suffers from diabetes, and this has resulted in damage to his right retina, leading to his being forced to wear an eyepatch in recent times. Popular at conventions both in England and the United States, he is noted for his sense of humor.

Inspired by his experiences in Belfast, White finds tales of soldiers or combat to be anathema for the most part, and prefers to create problem stories. To him, the point of a story must be that it forces his characters to exercise their ingenuity, not a sword or ray-gun or brute strength and good luck. His emphasis is on thinking first, then engaging in action. "To hold the attention of the reader a story must have conflict, which means that it must incorporate physical or emotional violence of some kind. But if a writer dislikes violence, senseless killing and all forms of war and is convinced that killers, no matter what their excuse, are something less than heroic and most certainly unworthy of being given sympathetic treatment in a story, he faces immediate difficulties. Avoiding these difficulties are the chief reason why so many of the leading characters in my stories are medics." (*Monsters & Medics*, introduction)

His dislike for the armed forces is shared somewhat by his main character in the Sector General stories, Conway. In the short story "Sector General" (not to be confused with his collection of the same name) Conway is very much against the Monitor Corps, whom he believes to be a bunch of sadistic, moronic killers. However, his



prejudices are stripped away when it turns out that the Monitor Corps is intended to prevent violence and war, and is almost the equivalent of a police force rather than a standing army. Eventually, he and the Corps come to respect and compliment one another in the locating and treatment of patients. In a similar way in "Medic", O'Mara too, finds the military repulsive.

Two other short stories and one novel aim at clarifying White's stand on this issue. In "Tableau", war is created on an interstellar scale when humans and aliens take too much for granted in their first contact, and for a great deal of the story the two races are trying to annihilate one another without even attempting to get together and talk out the problem. It is only when one man and one alien get to really know one another that they can start to put an end to the killing and destruction. Here White is saying that if we simply tried to talk things out, a lot of problems would get solved without violence; as it is, we are so far too fond of taking things for granted (such as our opponent's point of view) that we simply

don't bother. We prefer to fight. In the second story, "Occupation: Warrior", Earth and Kelgia are at war. Originally intended to be a story set in the same universe as the Sector General stories, White changed it on editor John Carnell's recommendation, but the underlying philosophy is very much in line with the Sector General stories. Here, the Galactics allow any races who wish to the opportunity to fight it out on an isolated planet, using chosen armies. But they do everything to discourage war—one world's army must be chosen by the enemy, who naturally choose the worst warriors that they can find. The Galactics then try and encourage the troops to desert, and to surrender, should a battle come to happen. But Dermod, a passionate believer in the supremacy of the Earth, fakes cowardice even to "fainting" when he sees his first alien, guaranteeing that he will be picked as leader of the human troops. He is, in fact, a brilliant tactician, and under his iron hand, the human dregs that make up the Terran army are turned into a lethal bunch of killers, grimly determined to annihilate the Kelgians—and any Galactics who get in their way. Without wishing to give away the ending of this excellent story, I will say that Dermod sees the error of his warped thinking and regrets his view of warfare as a glorious adventure to bring fame and honor to the Earth.

In his novel *Escape Orbit* (also known as *Open Prison*), James White takes a different look at a military operation. Humans and Bugs are at war and both sides are taking hundreds of captives. The Bugs have come up with the ideal solution—they have set up a prison planet, where they dump the humans to fend for themselves. Only one ship is in orbit, to scan for trouble. They will not allow technology, and the orbiting craft regularly scans for concentrations of metal, which indicates bombs. Warren arrives, a new captive who is the ranking officer, and sees that the world is split into two groups—the Escape Committee, who have a plan, and the Civilians. The latter are those who have no desire to escape. The two groups are at each other's throats. Warren realizes that

"In an interstellar war planets cannot be captured, Doctor. They can only be detonated."

unless he can do something, there will be civil war. The only solution that he can see is that he must take over as head of the Committee—and escape. Of course, he cannot allow anyone to know just *why* it is so important for him to escape...

Around this basic idea, White weaves a secondary one, showing the fanaticism of the military-minded Committee and some of the atrocities that they perpetrate on the Civilians in the name of escaping. He realizes that there are always those who will wish to fight, even without reason or cause. Somehow, society must find a solution to such deviants, without, if possible, stooping to the very violence which it wishes to destroy. Perhaps White's answer is a little easier to do in a novel than in real life, but at least he tries to tackle the subject.

In what must surely be his best novel, *The Dream Millennium*, he approaches the subject of violence again, from the viewpoint of a young medic. Earth is an armed madhouse, polluted and dying. "Scientifically and culturally we should be living in a golden age, so why are so many (people) bored and angry and violent?" asks one of his characters, obviously echoing his own sentiments. Teenage gangs are licensed to kill and apartment blocks wage war against one another. Sudden, brutal death is the norm in this angry, dying world and those pacifists who refuse to fight have very few rights indeed. Patricia Morley is a very beautiful young girl who cannot keep a boyfriend because they are always killed by someone who wants her for himself. She resorts to mutilating her face to escape the unwanted attention, meeting Devlin, the medic hero of the story. Together, they are befriended by Brother Howard, whose organization has a plan for the survival of at least a fraction of humanity. They plan to send a ship to the stars, with Devlin and Patricia as the crew.



All are in suspended animation for the journey, as the onboard computers seek a place where they can settle. What none of them suspect is that they will spend a thousand years dreaming...

"The dream began very badly, with a long and rapid succession of deaths. Like an endless deck of playing cards dealt face upward, they were presented briefly and with all the details clear before being replaced by another face of death with a greater or smaller value of fear, violence and pain." The question for them all is whether they will reach their destination before the dreams drive them all mad...The book works superbly on both levels, telling the story of Earth in flashbacks between the excellent dream sequences. It isn't hard to see our present generation as giving birth to the violence of *The Dream Millennium* and White seems to suggest here that the violence has gone too far for a simple solution. His "answer" in the novel is to send a group of humans off to start again from scratch.

In *Underkill*, he approaches the same question, but arrives at a different solution, that of drastically doing something about overpopulation and violence—with or without the approval of the human race.

Not all of his works are so serious and he is frequently highly light-hearted. In "The Conspirators", he presents us with a starship in which all of the creatures have mutated, to a frightening degree. The mice, guinea pigs and the ship's cat plan to jump ship and start a new colony. The only problem is that they must get used to moving in zero gee without alerting the humans to their new-found powers. The collection *Deadly Litter* contains four drily amusing stories. In "Grapeliner", we are faced with a glass flying saucer in space that collides with a rather odd Earth ship. The aliens and humans both panic and the old captain has to work out how to deal with panicking telepathic aliens while having virtually no resources to fall back on to do it with. "The Ideal Captain" is the story of a psychological trick that very nearly backfires on its creator. There have been problems on ships in the past travelling to Mars and beyond, mostly because the crews lost confidence in their captains. Now the *Mizar* has an ideal captain that no-one will ever rebel against—because he is non-existent. All of the crew see their own image of an ideal captain, so they will give him their trust, although the ship is really being run by Surgenor, a psychologist. But when the crew starts to talk mutiny, "Surgenor wondered suddenly which side the non-existent Captain would be on, his or theirs?" "The Lights Outside The Window" gives another psychosis for space—it is totally impossible for the male mind to look out at space and remain sane. So they have to be conditioned to be mildly insane to survive it—but it's a tough job for a woman to be Captain and mother to a crew of men that are mentally only four years

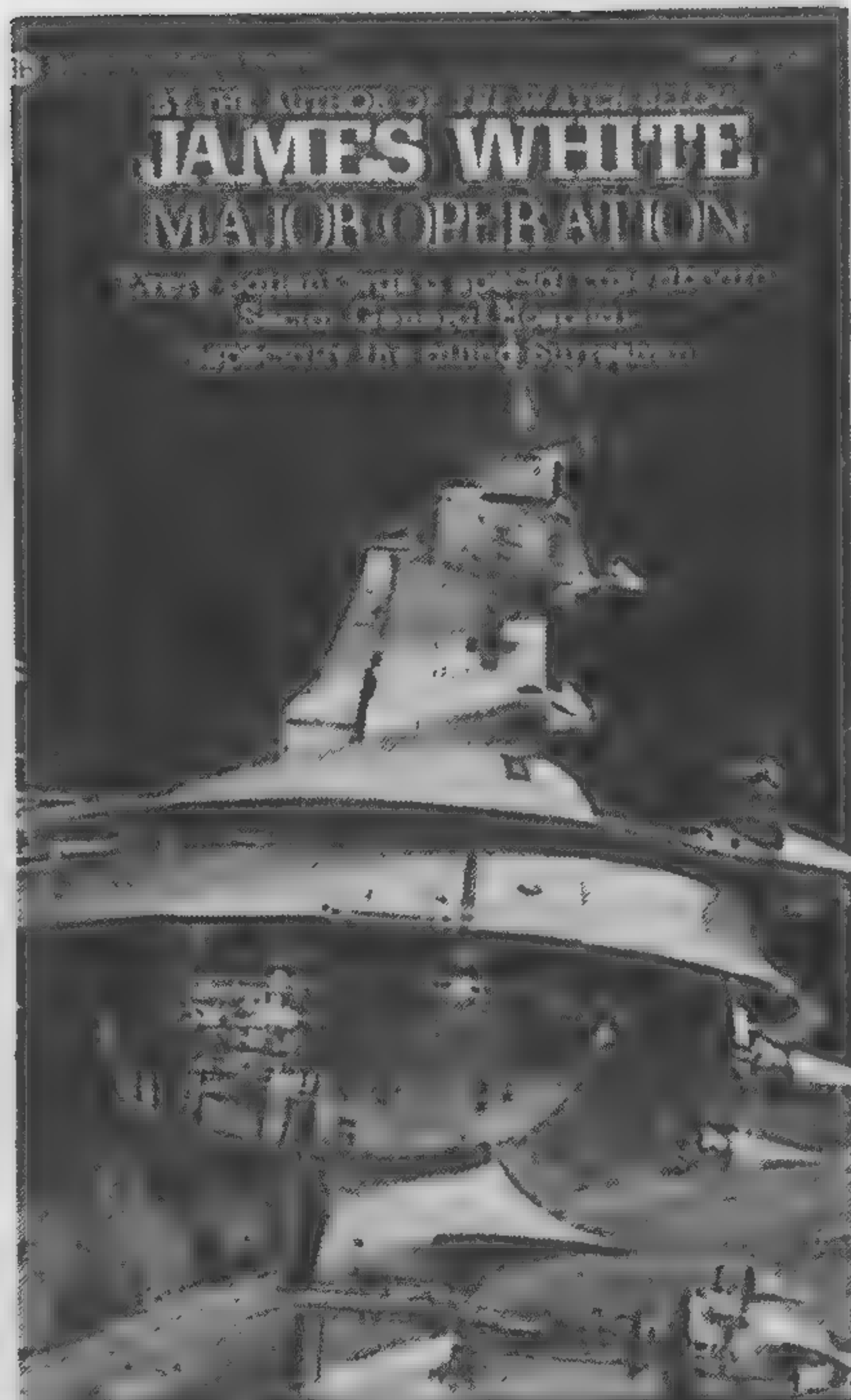
"I may be able to find some answers. The trouble is finding the right questions to ask."

old...The title story, "Deadly Litter", is not at all funny, because it is too serious.

On Earth, we tend to take littering for granted as a minor misdemeanor (even though it disgraces the neighborhood), but in space, littering has become the most serious crime of all. When something is thrown from a ship moving at starship velocities, it can intercept a ship moving in a different orbit at a different vector and the resultant collision can be very, very lethal indeed. In the story, these "swarms" of deadly litter must be tracked, plotted and marked as navigational hazards of the worst kind. It's a very grim view, but a very true one. Just imagine how much junk there is around at the moment and how lethal it could be if the next shuttle runs into some discarded screw travelling at several hundred miles an hour in a reverse direction to the shuttle...

His main love is the "problem" novel (or short story), giving the characters a situation with a very serious problem to solve. Generally it is one that will kill them if unresolved, so a number of his stories are pure disaster novels. (Ah, if only Irwin Allen would film some of them, instead of burning buildings, caving in caves, destroying bridges, unleashing swarms of bees...) In "To Kill Or Cure" an alien starship has crashed on the Irish Coast. A medical team tries to help, despite knowing nothing of alien anatomy, but how can they tell if they are aiding potential friends or would-be invaders?

"Assisted Passage" tells of a man who helps an ET go home and is court-martialed for his troubles when the ET steals a prototype rocket... In "Fast Trip", a passenger ship is disabled on take-off, injuring the captain and impairing their food and fuel supplies. They are enroute to Mars with insufficient fuel, insufficient food and, should they survive that, there's no one able to land the ship when they arrive... In "Outrider", a meteorite hits a ship, leaving it voiceless and blind. The only solution is for someone in a spacesuit to be strapped to the outside and "talk" her down...



"Basically your trouble is that you want to whistle after crabs. Female crabs, of course. I did not mean to imply there was anything seriously wrong with you."

My own favorite of all his "problem" short stories is the superb "Counter Security". There's something in a department store that is mutilating dolls and it's up to the night security man, Tully, to find out who, or what, is responsible. The SF part of the story is neat and very well resolved, but the magic of the story is in the character of Tully, who is obviously a piece of autobiographical fiction from White himself. Tully, even in such a short story, is a real character and not simply some cardboard cut-out designed to solve the problem he's faced with. Crazy as it may seem, you get to care very much for him as he goes about his nightly rounds of the store, and it's really absorbing reading.

In his novels, White also faces his characters with life and death problems. *Lifeboat* (English title: *Dark Inferno*) is the story of Mercer, the new medical officer on the *Eurydice*. This is his first trip into space, and his eagerness soon turns to horror when the ship undergoes disaster. Bad assembly for-

ces them to abandon ship into the life pods, and the problems mount after the ship explodes. They have to wait five days for rescue, and a lot can happen in overcrowded conditions in the pods in five days—like leaks; their air running short; personality clashes that lead to fights; and lust, with one woman alone in a pod with two sex-crazed men... Finally, the pods are approaching too close to the sun and are being heated by radiation... The solution is that there is a rescue ship on the way, but the problem is whether there will be anyone alive to meet it when it arrives.

His first novel, *The Secret Visitors*, faced secret service agents with what appears to be an enemy infiltration of old men, who commit suicide rather than reveal their names. But it is no foreign country involved—an alien tourist firm is exploiting the beauty and art of Earth. The agents are forced to join with Galactic operatives in a dash to the Galactic Center to move legally against the firm. But the firm has no intention of losing its vast profitable concern and fights back all the way. The story is perhaps a little rough, but the idea of an alien problem being tour agents is rather different, and their exploiting the natural scenic beauty of Earth is amusingly clever. (They even bribe their way aboard a starship using postcard views!)

On the less convincing side is *The Watch Below*. In 1942 the *Gulf Trader* is torpedoed by the Germans with five people trapped aboard in the hold. The ship floats in a stable condition just below the surface until it runs ashore finally at some depth. The survivors manage to stay alive by generating air from beans, light from a bicycle-powered generator and food from the boxes in the hold. Meanwhile in space, the Unthan survival fleet is heading for a new home after their planet is dying of heat as their sun expands. They have another problem—though their suspended animation units are working well, the awakening from sleep causes mental stress. The ships must be guided by a crew, but they cannot be continually awakened

Everyone seemed to have the idea that public relations, like writing, photography and painting, was a job that could be performed just as well by amateurs

and re-frozen. And no provision was made for any other solution... Both humans and aliens must adapt to long-term survival in a situation that is simply not conducive to it. When the Unthan fleet arrives on Earth, they find that it is inhabited already—and war seems to be their only option for survival.

The book is clever and logically sound, I suppose, but the trouble is that I simply can't believe in it. It doesn't seem plausible that the boat could last that long or the people not go mad (though they almost do) and so on. Technically a clever book, I find my response is to refuse to accept the possibility of it all. (However, according to *The Sun's* book reviewer, it was the "best real SF novel for several months", so opinions differ. *Punch* considered it an "exciting, convincing account" too, so maybe I missed something in it.)

Another of his books that fails to work too well for me is *Tomorrow Is Too Far*. Something strange is going on at Hart-Ewing aircraft firm and the security officer, Carson, is trying to piece it together. He finds scraps of paper that were supposed to have been burnt and veiled clues that add up to a secret project being conducted by the company. A janitor for Hart-Ewing, Pebbles, who is apparently mentally retarded, turns out to be a very competent flight instructor... And a top test pilot, on a routine flight, vanishes without a trace... But for Carson, finding out the answers can be very lethal indeed.

As in "Counter Security", White produces a very effective glimpse into the everyday life of the firm, creating a very believable background. In fact, the novel is an absolute joy until we reach the "real" SF and again we come to a premise I simply find hard to ac-



cept. Without wishing to give away the ending, it involves a loss of mind, almost a wiping of the mental slate and I find the reason for it to be rather unconvincing. Perhaps the fault lies with me, but I cannot enjoy this book too much because the ending lets me down so badly it fails to satisfy, which tends to ruin the beautiful effect of the first four-fifths of the story.

On the other hand, *All Judgement Fled* is a masterpiece, an absolute gem of a story. For once I'm in total agreement with the critics, because this novel won the Europa Science Fiction Prize for the best SF novel written between 1969 and 1971—and believe me—it is. An alien ship has entered the solar system, so two manned ships are launched to intercept it. The whole world waits as they approach it, wondering what they will find. At first, the humans are totally ignored, so they enter the airlock. Here they find several different life forms on the loose in the ship and are attacked by starfish-like aliens. The humans are injured and one "starfish" is killed. What chance do they have for a peaceful first contact now? And the world, watching, bitterly condemns what happens next...

"His only thought was a bemused observation that aliens were supposed to have ray guns and not sword-sticks."

The book is magnificent, a really first-class mystery and adventure story. White poses a beautiful question—when faced with an alien, how can you tell if it is intelligent or not? Maybe it's just playing dumb or maybe it really is an alien animal... how can you tell? And what sort of behavior should you follow when attacked by an alien who may be able to wipe out your planet without thinking? The book is very gripping and immensely satisfying; the characters, as always, are real and alive; the aliens themselves are very convincing and detailed. It's a book that no SF lover should miss.

Having dealt with his unconnected stories, all that remains is to talk about his best and best-loved works, the Sector General series. White had always wanted to be a doctor, but economic necessity made his dream just that—he *had* to work at another profession. Instead, he lives his medical aspirations in his stories of alien surgery.

The main character in the stories is Conway, introduced in the short story, "Sector General". The stories follow him through his years with the space hospital, where he becomes one of its best and most valued workers. He is unorthodox and very perceptive, spotting solutions when others frequently cannot even see the problems. He is aided by O'Mara, a psychologist in charge of the staff at Sector General, who has a somewhat similar mind. His introductory story, "Medic", faced him with the problem of caring for an alien baby that weighs several tons and must be fed every two hours. Then it falls sick and he must treat it from a book of dubious merit, without any kind of medical aids at all... Needless to say, he succeeds brilliantly and gains a very high post on the completed hospital.

"He wondered sleepily if biting the nails was in itself a mild form of cannibalism"

Conway's two other aids and friends are Prilicla and Murchison, both of whom are introduced in "Visitor At Large". Prilicla is a six-legged giant insect with empathic powers that are very useful, especially across language-barriers. Murchison is a human nurse of obviously desirable qualities, whom Conway loves from almost the first. (He gets his girl, of course, but between stories.) Murchison is a pathologist and the team of the three of them (shouted at by O'Mara) gets a lot of weird and complex cases...like Emily, the brontosaurus—a hundred foot dinosaur being looked after by a doctor that looks like a shrivelled prune... or a shape-shifter that can assume almost any form to perfection and is young, scared and very hungry—some of the life-forms under treatment must look very appetizing indeed...

The "supermen" of the hospital are the Diagnostics, who take alien tapes (memory tapes that give medical and other knowledge from a given alien species) to do research work. Unfortunately, it means that they have several different "people" living in their heads and trying to control the Diagnostic's actions... Ordinary doctors take a tape when they have to treat an alien and no doctor of that species is available, but it can lead to very strange complications...

"Conway rolled over onto his stomach, and his last thought before going peacefully to sleep was that of course any being with a heavy carpace would feel helpless and afraid if it was forced to sleep on its back." ("Countercharm")

Naturally, the stories tend to be very interconnected and seem almost to be a novel in several parts. *Star Surgeon* has the overall theme of war with the corrupt Empire that rules the Greater Megallanic Cloud. Having discovered

the location of Sector General, the Empire tries to make their slave species believe that all of their troubles arise from the hospital and our Galaxy, declaring a "just" war...Sector General is evacuated and manned by the Monitor Corps and a skeleton doctoring staff needed to deal with casualties—though not many people survive a battle in space, where the smallest scratch across a spacesuit is almost invariably fatal.

Major Operation deals with a world called Meatball and the odd life-forms on the planet that need help. The stories were all printed together originally in the English book/magazine *New Writings in SF*, and tie together around the central theme of medical aid to the newly-found planet. (The native species, the Drambons, must keep moving to stay alive, and were created by Bob Shaw as a "present".)

A new direction is formed in *Ambulance Ship*, when Conway, Prilicla and Murchison are assigned to work on the *Rhabwar*, a sort of space rescue vehicle run by the Corps. It is designed to answer calls of distress from non-Federation ships as an aid in contacting new space-going species. It works under the assumption that offering help to aliens in distress is a good way of starting a first contact off very well—that the aliens will then be very grateful. Of course, the problem is that sometimes you may not know quite what is aid in a given situation... For example, in "Combined Operation" the *Rhabwar* finds what appears to be a lot of survivors from a smashed-up space wheel all in suspended animation...or maybe it's just one survivor in a lot of little bits? And what do you do with a life-form like that?

The greatest joy of reading a James White story is in meeting his new life-forms. He creates aliens that are totally believable, going into detail about their home world, their evolutionary background and the reason for any special features or abilities that they may possess (or may

have missing—like blind earthworms reaching for the stars). In every single case, I find the creatures he creates are perfectly feasible and often very admirable. Always he is original and very, very inventive. Mind you, he does have a problem—he can't simply invent an alien species and have done with it. Then there would be no story. Instead, he has to create the beasties, then make them sick somehow and then figure out a way to cure them... And he does it beautifully, too.

When Corgi Books in England were creating their SF Collectors' Library back in 1973, two of the first books on their lists were *Hospital Station* and *Star Surgeon*—and with justification. The Sector General stories are among the best that have been created in SF, deserve the large audience that they have and will continue to delight both old fans and new readers for many years. Certainly James White seems happy enough to keep on creating new problems for the most famous medical staff in science fiction.

For the new reader coming upon James White for the first time, the choice of books is easy. Unfortunately, as I write this, *All Judgement Fled* is out of print in the USA, but we can hope that Ballantine Books will soon reprint this, as they have his other books. Until then, start with the brilliant *The Dream Millenium* and the first Sector General book, *Hospital Station*. After that, just carry on—White is worth having a complete collection of on your bookshelves and his books are mostly available in current editions. Enjoy—I certainly do.

"In his profession Michaelson was continually being reminded that devils were fallen angels and that few of them had had time for plastic surgery on the way down."

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Blood Brother
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Survivor
Investigation
Combined Operation

Also the two short stories:

"Countercharm" (in *The Aliens Among Us*)

"Spacebird" (in *Futures Past*)

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To Kill Or Cure
Red Alert
Tableau
The Conspirators
The Scavengers
Occupation: Warrior

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The Ideal Captain
The Lights Outside The Window

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Nuisance Value
In Loving Memory

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Underkill (Corgi 1979)

Futures Past (Ballantine 1982)

Spacebird
Commuter
Assisted Passage
Curtain Call
Boarding Party
Patrol
Fast Trip
Question of Cruelty
False Alarm
Dynasty Of One
Outrider

All Judgement Fled (Corgi 1969; Ballantine 1970)

In recent years, James White has started a new series of short stories in *Analog*. The first, *Federation World*, appeared in August 1980. The second, *The Scourge*, in January 1982.

THE PRISONER



©ITV

Part 1 By Cynthia Broadwater

"I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed or numbered. My life is my own."

The year is 1967. Computers are not in the average American home. The U.S. Government, which provides numbered categories for all types of business, has no listing for retailing computers, it is the sole domain of wholesale. Only businesses and the government can afford this twentieth century wonder. As the computer network grows, we find ourselves flooded with numbers—social security numbers, driver license numbers, zip codes, area codes, employee numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers....

Of course numerical listing had existed for centuries but now it seems to snowball in astronomical proportions. We fear losing our identity to the almighty computer. Our mail warns us not to fold, spindle or mutilate that little card containing our telephone bill, water bill, electric bill or mortgage payment.

Writers are reacting to this fear. *Colossus*, *The Forbin Project* foretells a computer that would dominate the world. During its three year run *Star Trek* would spend many episodes destroying domineering computers.

Spies dominate the media, led by favorite 007. When Illya and Napoleon are in UNCLE headquarters familiar

numbers hang from their chests. In America the British spy show *Danger Man* runs as *Secret Agent Man* with catchy lyrics "They've given you a number and taken 'way your name."

It is with this series, *Danger Man* or *Secret Agent Man*, that *The Prisoner* began. Patrick McGoochan maintained his secret agent as a highly moral character, not giving in to the weaknesses of the flesh. Yet after six years he felt he could go no further with the program, he needed something new, something challenging. George Markstein, who would become the script editor for *The Prisoner*, provided the idea. Markstein was an ex-journalist as well as an expert

on the military and espionage. He remembered a story, supposedly true, of a type of prison in Scotland during World War II. The prison was set up as a community and high risk cases were brought there for "protection". McGoochan took the idea and molded it into his own.

Markstein's idea pushed the concept of a village, a community artificially formed for security purposes. McGoochan's idea focused on the individual, the man who refuses to lose his identity no matter how attractive the payoff. McGoochan appears to state that they can imprison (temporarily at least) your body, muck about in your mind, twist reality to their likes, but as long as you are true to yourself, you will overcome. But it is a constant fight... and in the final battle your real enemy might surprise you.



REGULAR CAST

Patrick McGoochan.....Number 6
 Angelo Muscat.....The Butler
 Peter Swanwick.....Supervisor

REGULAR CREW

Script Editor.....George Markstein
 Executive Producer.....Patrick McGoochan
 Producer.....David Tomblin
 Production Manager.....Bernard Williams
 Photography.....Brendan J. Stafford
 Art Director.....Jack Shampain
 Camera Operator.....Jack Lowin
 Theme.....Ron Grainer
 Cameraman.....Robert Monks
 Asst. Director.....Gino Morotta
 Sound Recorder.....John Bramall
 Casting Director.....Rosc Tobias-Shaw
 Costumes.....Doris Martin
 Set Design.....Kenneth Briderman
 Makeup.....Eddie Knight
 Hair Dressing.....Pat McDermot
 Wardrobe.....Masada Wilmot

EPISODE I ARRIVAL CAST

Virginia Maskell.....The Woman
 Guy Doleman.....Number 2
 Paul Eddington.....Cobb
 George Baker.....New Number 2

Barbara Yu Lang.....Taxi Driver
 Stephanie Randell.....Maid
 Jack Allen.....Doctor
 Fabia Drake.....Welfare Worker
 Denis Shaw.....Shopkeeper
 Oliver McGreevy.....Gardner
 Christopher Benjamin.....Labor Exchange
 Manager
 David Garfield.....Hospital Attendent
 Peter Brace.....First Guardian
 Keith Peacock.....Second Guardian
 Patsy Smart.....Woman
 Frederick Piper.....Lieutenant

CREW

Editor.....Lee Doig
 Director.....Don Chaffey
 George Markstein
 Script.....David Tomblin
 Sound Editor.....Wilford Thompson
 Music Editor.....Bob Dearburg

There is a storm brewing, heralded by the clap of thunder. Speeding down the road towards us is a Lotus 7, Plate Number KAR 120C. The man behind the wheel, Patrick McGoochan, has the look of a man who has made a difficult decision. He pilots his car into the heart of London. The music swells punctuating the growing storm... an internal storm. The man marches down a dark hallway, then paces back and forth in front of another man behind a desk. Obviously angry, he throws down an envelope containing his resignation.

The man then returns to his apartment, ready to pack and leave. Meanwhile impersonal mechanical devices are crossing through his picture, lifting his file and placing it in a

Stu Art
'84

*I am not
a number...
I am a man!
a free man!*



the
village



drawer marked Resigned.

A hearse pulls up to the man's apartment and an undertaker steps out. The driver releases gas into the apartment and the man passes out. When he awakens he seems to be in his apartment—until he opens a window and sees—for the first time—The Village.

The man immediately goes out to investigate. The employees of The Cafe give him no information. The shopkeeper only has maps of The Village, showing it surrounded by The Mountains and The Sea. Telephones are for local service only as is The Taxi Service. The Village is a totally self-contained community, as if it existed in a bubble with no outside world remaining.

Returning to his "home" the man receives a telephone call and for the first time is referred to as Number 6. He is invited to visit Number 2... Green Dome.

If The Village has a quaint, home-like atmosphere, the inner sanctum of the green dome is a modern, technological wonder. Number 2 sits enfolded by an orb chair, surrounded by a smooth desk that promises hidden buttons and readout panels. The walls are huge projection screens that can be used to monitor citizens of The Village, project information or, at rest, send flashing lights or Lava Lamp projections.

Number 2 demonstrates to Number 6 the extent of detailed personal information they have available on him, down to the number of eggs he has with his bacon. Pictures of his childhood mingle with the immediate past. Number 6 grabs the data-filled notebook from Number 2, quickly scanning the information. He is angry but refuses to let that anger get the best of him. He is in a deadly game with an enemy of unknown strength. Like two boxers the men spar, only with words.

"The time of my birth is missing," comments No. 6.

"Well, there you are. Now let's bring it all up to date."

"4:31 A.M. 19th of March, 1928. I have nothing to say. I've resigned, I will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed or numbered. My life is my own."

But if Number 6 is to be the Master of his own destiny he is up against a big opponent. The Village is skilled in breaking down resistance. Number 6 is very important to The Village and to the absent Number 1. He has a great deal of information in his head. The rulers of The Village cannot believe he simply resigned as a matter of principle or that he was on his way for an extended holiday when they captured him. Such simple motives are not in their vocabulary. So the process of breaking down Number 6 begins.

First Number 2 takes Number 6 on an ariel tour of The Village via the Village Helicopter. Then at The Village Square 2 demonstrates The Village's mysterious guardian, a large, white, balloon-like thing that can render a person unconscious... or dead.

A maid is sent to clean Number 6's apartment and makes an attempt to seduce him into revealing the information. She fails. He is far too concerned with escape. Finally he makes a break for it, but is enveloped by the white balloon.

When he awakens in The Hospital he discovers an old comrade, Cobb, who was going to sell out just before his disappearance. After a brief talk with a Doctor, 6 returns to

find that Cobb has committed suicide.

Watching the Funeral procession, Number 6 discovers a particularly upset young woman and arranges to meet her. She explains she had been planning to help Cobb escape via the Village Helicopter with the use of an electronic key. She gives the key to Number 6 and he makes the attempt to escape. The Helicopter is controlled, of course, by Number 2 and his Supervisors... but it is a different Number 2. Number 6 disembarks again at The Village. Cobb, alive and well, leaves the Green Dome for his new assignment.

The first episode introduced a number of questions, some of which would be answered during the course of the program and some which would not. First, who is Number 6 and why was he so important?

Fans of the show assume Number 6 is John Drake, the moral secret agent of *Danger Man*. However, that is never confirmed nor denied in the show. The character is played very closely to the John Drake personality. With a fine actor such as Patrick McGoochan doing both parts this can scarcely be a coincidence.

Who is Number 1? That is saved for the last episode.

Why were there two Number 2s? That position seemed to have an extremely high turnover rate. Only one actor played the part twice, and then apparently they were not the same man. Number 2s were not allowed failures and Number 6 made failures of them all.

Where was The Village? During the course of the program many sites were mentioned, but nothing was ever confirmed. It truly existed outside the realm of the normal.

What was the large white balloon? "That would be telling."

Who could you trust? No one. But by trusting no one, nothing could ever be accomplished. It created a fine sense of paranoia.

Why did Number 6 resign? Is he telling the truth, and if he is, why don't they believe him?

Which side are they on? They have Cobb working for them and he was going to sell out to the other side. Yet in a later episode high ranking officials that Number 6 had worked for prior to his imprisonment answer The Village's call to break the man.

The Woman who helps Number 6 in his escape attempt is working for Number 2 and yet she truly wants to help him. She wants him to escape, but in the end is reminded by another citizen of The Village that "we all are pawns, my dear."

EPISODE II THE CHIMES OF BIG BEN

CAST

Leo McKern.....Number 2
Nadia Gray.....Nadia
Finlay Currie.....General
Richard Wattis.....Fortheringay

Number 8 revealed herself as Nadia. Number 6 believed himself safe and yet he never gave his name. For all his posturing of being a man, not a number, the hero of The Prisoner *never* gave himself a name. Nadia's response to being called Number 8 is a reasonable one, "I am not Number 8, my name is Nadia." This makes her an individual. But Number 6 says "I am not a number, I am a Man". This makes him representative of mankind as a whole.

McGoohan's Everyman represents the best in human nature at odds with the worst in society, represented by The Village. Yet denying him a name during the course of the program curiously denies him the very humanity he represents.

This is one of our first glimpses of life in The Village. For those who have "settled in" there is much to occupy their time. In this episode it is the Art and Craft Show. Of course the whole contest is rigged, but isn't that what every loser says about a competition outside of The Village?

In the first episode, Cobb is introduced, a man who was planning to sell out. This episode Fortheringay, a man of importance in the British espionage service, is also seen working for The Village. The inhabitants of The Village belong to many nationalities, indicating that perhaps The Village is an international organization not just working for one side or the other.

The time difference is a weak plot device. A highly skilled group of people such as the operators of The Village, who had the foresight to provide a watch from a plant, would not overlook the time difference. In fact chances are that Karl would give Number 6 the watch for the purpose of



The Village provides a perpetual puzzle to No. 6. ©ITV

controlling the time perfectly. The writers simply needed a way of alerting Number 6 to the deception and this seemed the simplest method.



Number 14 prepares Number 6 for a dream interrogation in "A, B & C". ©ITV

EPISODE III A, B & C

CAST

Katherine Kath.....Engadine
Sheila Allen.....Number 14
Colin Gordon.....Number 2
Peter Bowles.....A
Annette Carel.....B
Georgina Cookson.....Blonde Lady
Lucille Song.....Flower Girl
Berrine LeBeau.....Maid at Party
Terry York
Peter Brayman.....Thugs
Bill Cummings.....Henchman

CREW

Director.....Pat Jackson
(Patrick McGoohan)
Script.....Anthony Skene
Editor.....Geoffrey Foot
Incidental Music.....Albert Elms
Sound Editor.....Peter Elliott
Music Editor.....Eric Mibal



The Prisoner had planned on leaving for an extended holiday before his capture by those who rule The Village. ©ITV

Number 2 this time is a nervous frightened little man. Number 1 is pressing him for results with Number 6. He believes he has the answer with technology being perfected by Number 14. Number 14 has developed a machine that can project dreams up on a screen and a device that allows her to plant certain conditions into that dream.

Number 2 has determined that 6's contact would have been one of three people, A, B or C. He believes Number 6 resigned to turn traitor and one of these three would have been the recipient of some vital information. Number 6 is drugged and his dream projected on the screen, a replay of his resignation. The man has a one track mind.

Number 14 injects him with a drug that will make him susceptible to her suggestions, but just before he passes out, his eyes open and he gets a good look at her.

Under the direction of 2 they place him in a party in Paris given by socialite Engadine. A is introduced. A is a former colleague of 6 who went over to the other side. He wants the information in Number 6's head and kidnaps him to get it. Number 6 defeats A and his band of thugs and the session is over for the night.

The next day 6 awakens and notices the puncture left by the injection. Stepping outside he sees 14 and follows her. He questions who she is and when she came to The Village for last week 14 was an elderly lady (apparently they recycle the numbers quickly). She brushes him off.

Next, he goes to see Number 2 to let him know that he is aware that something has occurred. He ends the interview with the obscure allusion to 14 being his favorite Doctor. Number 2 stares nervously at the red phone, hot line from Number 1.

B is a woman, a very capable spy and friend of 6's. In his dream B reacts as Number 6 would expect her to. She does not ask the question that Number 2 wants answered. Number 14 adds a voice connection and asks the questions herself. The change in B's behavior alerts 6, even in his sleep, and he refuses to believe in her. Experiment two is a failure.

The next morning Number 6 finds another needle mark on

his wrist. He determines to get to the bottom of this and follows 14 into the laboratory. Once there he figures out the plot. That night he drinks water from the tap instead of the drugged tea. At the laboratory he has already exchanged the mind bending syrup with a harmless solution.

Number 2 does not know the appearance of C and has to depend on Number 6 to provide this information. The dream begins tilted and distorted, not clear as it had the first two times. Number 6 consciously straightens the dream by straightening a mirror.

C makes contact and is revealed to be Engadine. Number 2 is overjoyed. Then he learns there is someone even higher up than C (D?). Number 6 goes to meet this mysterious individual and hand over the envelope with the valuable reason for his resignation. He insists that D reveal himself before he turns over the information. Ripping the mask off of D, he reveals Number 2. The scene changes to 6 entering the lab and offering Number 2 that precious envelope. When Number 2 takes it he finds only travel brochures. Number 6 takes his place on the table and the scene returns to his resignation. Number 2 has failed.

This was the first script directed by Patrick McGoohan, although the credits listed Pat Jackson. It pointed the direction that he would send the series, deep into the realm of symbolism, for are dreams not the ultimate symbolism?

Letters being assigned to people instead of numbers show that names are perhaps just as impersonal as numbers. After all, names are made up of letters. Is 14 (two numbers) any less impersonal than 6? Is Al (two letters) any less impersonal than A? What matters is the man beneath the letters or numbers.

Mind control and brainwashing were major concerns in the Sixties and Seventies as newer and better drugs made even the most dependable person a security risk. Number 6 succumbs to their manipulations until he understands the problem, then he twists it to his advantage, natural man overcoming artificial influences.

Humor also surfaces in this episode. Number 6 toys with Number 2, a man obviously unable to handle the pressures of his position. Number 2 even voices concern over whether 6 is truly human or not. Number 14 makes the comment about naming the unknown spy "D". She is also convinced that Number 6 was really going on holiday when she sees the contents of the envelope. The final dream sequence was an elaborate joke on Number 6's part.

The inability of The Village operators to provide a picture of C demonstrates a fallibility in the system that had not been seen before. When Number 2 sees Engadine is C (true or part of 6's joke?) he excitedly comments that they will have to pick her up and bring her to The Village. Is this a separate operation? Selling the information obtained, or blackmailing countries with their own security?

Each episode served to create more questions. As the viewer believed he had the answer, the rules would change and he would find himself emeshed in a web where nothing was what it seemed.



The Prisoner finds life in the tranquil Village to expensive... the price is his freedom. © ITV

BLACKPOOL LONGLEAT

Stu Pitt
078

THOSE MARVELLOUS EXHIBITIONS



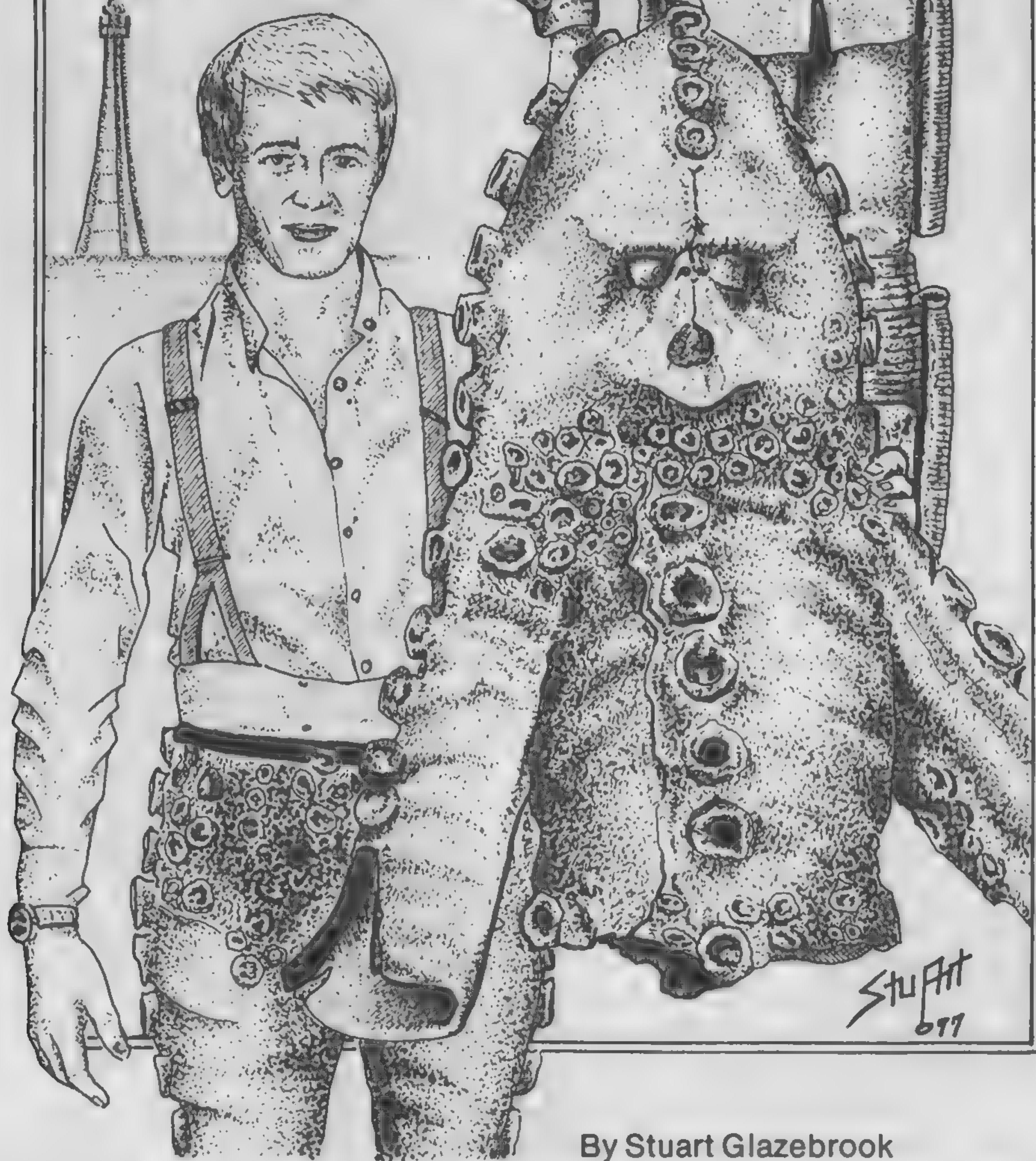
TIME-LORD

BOO!

ST4RE



Steve Balon.. MONSTER MAN!



By Stuart Glazebrook

Steve Balon is one helluva dedicated guy. Most weekends during the summer he makes the 40 mile trip to Blackpool and the famous *Dr. Who* Exhibition. Here he undergoes an amazing transformation to become a Cyberman, a Zygon or whatever alien is going "spare" at the time!

If you've been lucky enough to visit the exhibition within the past two

years you may well have seen Steve prowling around the dark corridors much to the horror of some of the visitors, as one of the "exhibits" comes to life and lurches towards them!

But although his job is very enjoyable and the stuff dreams are made of, I can assure you that it is very hard work to do an eight hour stint in semi-darkness wearing a heavy rubber suit and mask.



Steve Balon unmasked as a mobile Krynoid outside the entrance to the Blackpool Doctor Who exhibition. ©Steve Balon

The most punishing day of all being the Blackpool Carnival Procession at the height of the summer last year when he made the multi-mile walk behind Doctor Who, wearing the outfit of Field Major Styre, in blazing sunshine. As Steve is a friend of mine, I was asked if I could do an interview with him, so upon a recent visit to his home....

FE: You must be the envy of thousands, how did you get the job?

BALON: I have always loved *Doctor Who* so in 1974 I visited the Exhibition to take a look and I got talking with the manager. I asked, more or less as a joke, if I could try on a costume, and to my surprise he agreed. I couldn't believe it, but there I was in a Cyberman rig, and, well it just went on from there!

FE: How often do you appear at the Exhibition?

BALON: As often as I can! Mostly at weekends and holidays, as my job allows. I share a friend's flat when I'm there so I can stay for days at a time.

FE: What exactly is your purpose there?

BALON: I am merely there to promote a feeling to the visitors that they are really in the world of *Doctor Who*. From the looks on some of their faces—it works!

FE: Which costumes have you worn so far?

BALON: The first I wore was that of the Cyberleader from "Revenge of the Cybermen", then a Zygon, an Exxilon, Sea Devil and finally last year, the Sontaran Styre.

FE: Which was your favorite, and why?

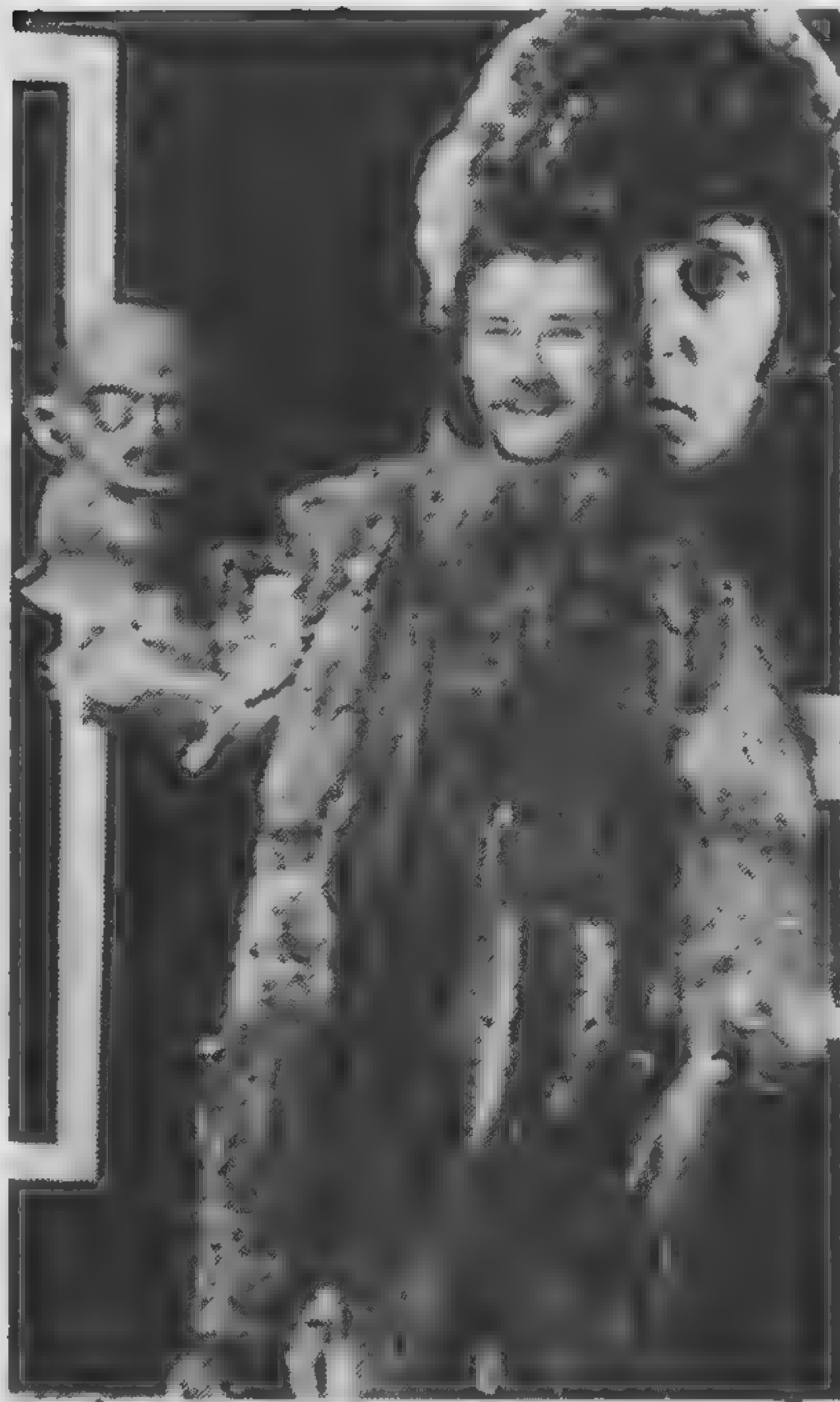
BALON: That's a hard one! I think Styre because I liked the Sontaran stories and besides, it is the most comfortable. I liked the Zygon and Exxilon very much.

FE: Which is the most uncomfortable, and why?

BALON: The Cyberman, without a doubt! The suit is made of thick rubber and it soon gets very hot inside. The helmet too acts as an echo chamber and it is very claustrophobic—it's more like having your head in a box than wearing a mask! But really, all the suits get uncomfortable, some worse than others, but sometimes it gets so hot you just have to sit down and rest, take a long cool drink and wipe the sweat from your eyes!

FE: How long does it take to put the costume on?

BALON: It varies, the Cyberman takes the longest because of fastening up the tubes and screwing the back of the helmet on—that takes about thirty minutes. The rest only took fifteen-



Inside an Exxilon—Steve Balon! Taken inside the exhibition at Blackpool. ©Steve Balon



Steve Balon and Stuart Glazebrook (in the Cyberman costume) by the merchandising stand inside the exhibition. ©Steve Balon

twenty minutes.

FE: What is the general reaction to you?

BALON: One of great surprise and shock! The youngsters aren't too bad but sometimes you get the odd one who is so scared he won't go through the exhibition. It all depends on the people themselves, some adults have been so scared that their hair stands literally on end! You see, I like to stand perfectly still when someone is coming, and although I'm stood in the corridor, they think I'm another exhibit. Most like to reach out and touch, but when I move and touch them back—WOW! If only you could see their faces!

FE: What has been the most amusing incident?

BALON: Easy! There's a cafe above the exhibition, and one day I was in the Zygon rig when I went up for a break but forgot to remove the top half, and in I went. Never have I seen a place come alive so fast, 'cos the rig is particularly realistic and revolting. People just dropped what they held and glared in amazement. Those nearest me shot up and backed off, but once I explained we all had a good laugh—some actually thought the Martians had landed!

FE: Ever had any nasty moments?

BALON: Only one, in the Zygon costume again. I went upstairs for a breather and was standing against the Tardis when three drunks appeared; once they'd discovered that they weren't seeing things they grabbed me and tried to drag me over the road to throw me "back" in the sea! Luckily, I was rescued by "Tiny", our 18 stone attendant.

FE: What is your favourite memory?

BALON: Oh, just walking around the corridors in the costumes. The weird thing is that after a while you really begin to think that you're an alien being meeting people from another world. I guess it's because of people's reaction to you all day and the strange feel of the costume. I don't really know, but the rig kind of takes you over, it's really an odd feeling—but a nice one.

FE: You tried to get a part on TV didn't you?

BALON: Yes, I wrote to Philip Hinchcliffe telling him of my job, and asked what were the chances of playing a monster? He wrote a nice reply telling me that to qualify for a place on *Doctor Who* I would have to be in the actors union.

EXHIBITION PERIENCE



By Stuart Glazebrook

"Had I known it was gonna be this rough, my mate, I may well not have bothered!"

"Hey, I know what you mean Stu," replied Steve Balon, "but believe me, this is one of the easiest rigs to get into!"

There wasn't much relief in hearing that though, as Steve busied himself lacing and zipping me into the "Robot of Death" Voc costume. Yet once the feeling of being trussed up like a turkey had passed, I realized that the costume was rather comfortable—for the moment. I still had to be clasped into the face "helmet" and venture outside into the hot summer sun.

DATELINE: 17th June 1978 at the Blackpool Doctor Who Exhibition. "Monster Man" Steve Balon, who is often to be seen there (hidden in a monster costume) had asked me to join him for the day, so, not knowing what rigs would be spare we went along and asked the Manager to "co-monster" with him.

Permission was granted, so, taking the "stage door" by the sales kiosk we

entered the cavern of the Daleks to search out some costumes, which are kept in a chest immediately behind the Daleks. Now, if you have been to the Exhibition, you'll know that from time to time the Daleks move behind the rocks on small tracks; if you haven't, well, you know now. So there I was behind these rocks, on my hands and knees in the dark, helping Steve find the rigs for us when I was hit from behind and sent sprawling. It was a moving experience, if you get my drift, to find a Dalek looming over me seemingly voicing the words that boomed from the loudspeakers over our heads—"You are the Doctor. You will be Exterminated!"

"Oh, er, be careful of the Daleks Stu," droned Steve's voice from inside the closet. "They can give you a nasty whack if they hit you."

"Thanks, Steve!"

Anyhow, to cries of joy, he found a Voc costume for me and an Exxillon rig, which is a very simple affair, made up of just a head mask and a shammy leather cloak, for himself. I was very

surprised to see the Robot costume consisted of nine pieces. So, here's a rundown on the dressing of a Voc: First to go on are the trousers which, with an elasticated waist presented no problem at all, though they feel a little strange due to their rigidity, making it impossible to kneel. Next on is the undersuit, which is a strange garment made of green linen, with green quilt Voc arms attached. It is laced up the front like a football boot. Over this goes the long sleeveless top coat with the high collar to hide the neck and throat. It zips up the front and laces up the sides. This bore the name of Richard Seager in pen.

The soft footwear comes next, which is very much like wearing a pair of slippers with a silver lurex covering, extending sock-like to an elasticated top. Then, the hinged fibreglass numberplate which goes over the head to rest snugly on the shoulders, this being the flaw in the whole appearance, for though I was wearing the costume of a V-Class Robot, the number reads D33. Even Robots can't be perfect! To top it



The Doctor Who Exhibition, Blackpool.

A Cyberman.

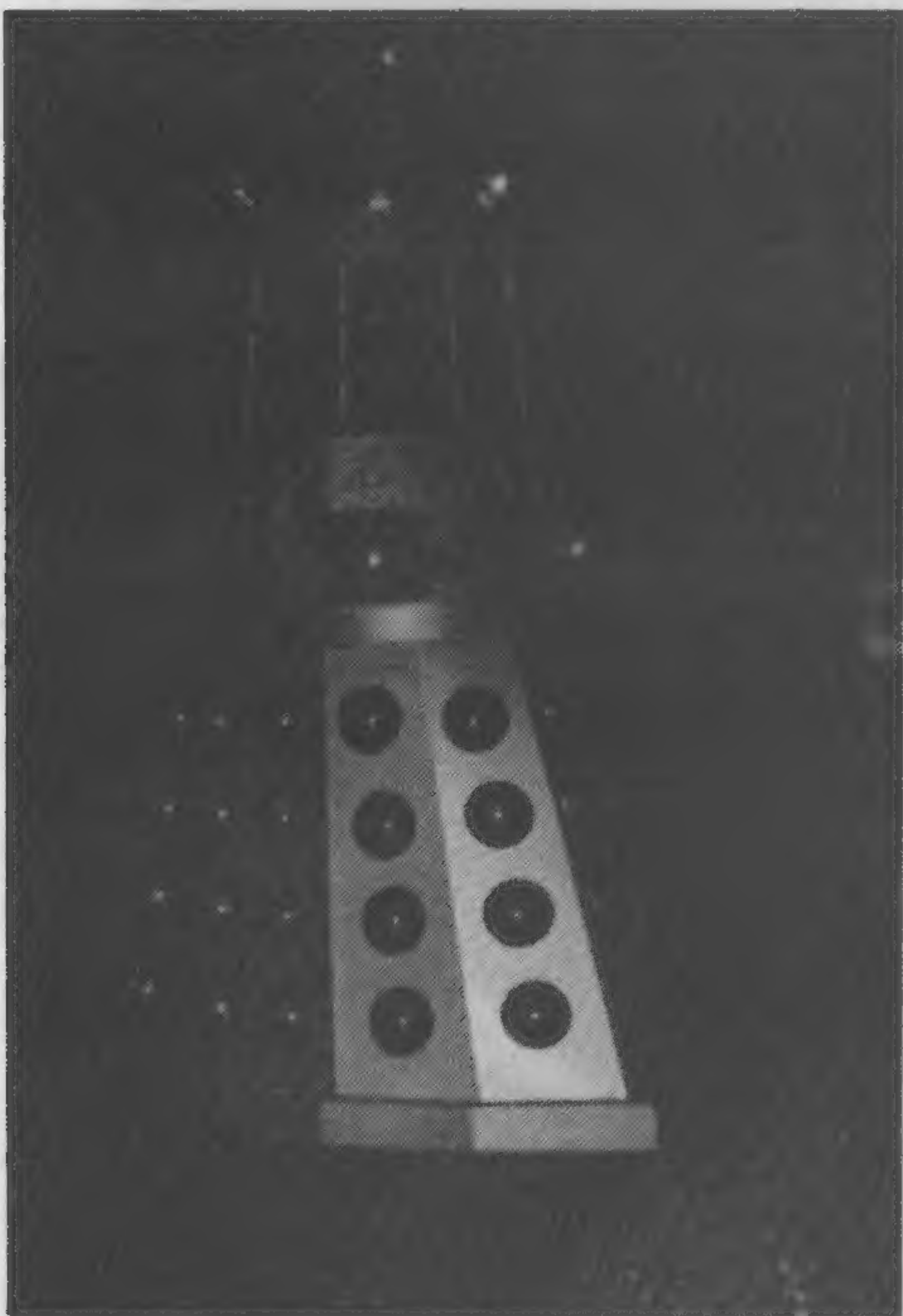


Eldran (from "The Hand Of Fear") and a Zygon.

All photo ©John Peel

all off is the beautifully moulded fibreglass head. This goes over the head and face, then the back of the head is locked in position by means of a hook and a liberal use of velcro fastening which, once in position, produces a highly claustrophobic feeling. The eye-holes are a mere quarter of an inch in diameter, giving only very limited vision, directly in front. There are only two very small breathing holes in the nostrils and a very small slit in the mouth which makes breathing quite difficult. To make yourself heard you literally have to shout. The voice booms around the inside of the mask like an echo-chamber.

Still, donning the silver-sprayed washing-up gloves, I was now a Voc Robot, though I didn't feel very much like one, until seeing human reaction as I patrolled the dark corridors. For it is then, as Steve has told me on numerous occasions, that a strange feeling bubbles up as though the rig has a power of its own and you begin to feel and think as would the creature you are portraying. And in a sense, the rigs do possess a quality of power, for after all, people react to the costume, not the person inside, who is simply bringing the monster to life. Though I



Daleks!



The Sand Mines from "The Robots Of Death".

sadly admit that a party of young ladies, thinking our costumes great and having photographs taken with us, asked that I remove my mask and upon doing so, they began to scream in a very disturbing manner. But posing for photos and signing autographs is quite an enjoyable part of it all even though it seems odd to sign yourself as "Best Wishes, D33".

The worst part of the day, however, was when we were asked to go outside and pull the crowds in, as it was one of those days for T-shirts, shorts and sunning on the beach. After a few minutes of the Sun hitting my plastic and fibreglass suit, the temperature inside began to soar and I was rapidly becoming damp and uncomfortable. Tending to the crowds didn't help much either as uncontrollable little tykes tugged and pulled at anything loose amid requests of "Will you hold little Jimmy while we take a photo of you?" One nods in agreement and pulls unseen faces at the camera while little Jimmy bawls his head off in your ear.

But, to end on a more amusing note, remembering that, as I've said, vision is very limited in the headmask: I was stood perfectly still at the bottom of the entrance stairway as two young lads warily approached. Eyeing me up

and down for a few moments they came to the conclusion I was a display model and began to touch the costume—I kept still until one of them touched the face mask then I flung my arms out and lurched forward. Never in my whole life have I seen two guys jump so much or look as terrified! "They won't try to touch anymore exhibits!" I thought as I moved onwards, feeling thoroughly monstrous. Then I went and ruined the whole effect by misjudging a right turn and slammed smack into a wall—literally! With a clang that jarred every bone in my body, I must admit to feeling pretty stupid as my two "victims" rolled off down the corridor, laughing fit to bust a gut.

At the days end as I eased back into my own cool, dry clothes, I couldn't help feeling a little sad that the hard day was over, but there was the fact that more days like this, and more different costumes were to come.

Indeed, this year I was garbed as the "Gold User" from "The Invasion Of Time" when the place was invaded by hordes of Doctor Who Appreciation Society members much to the surprise and amusement of all concerned. You can't keep a good Time Lord down!



Notice how there's never anyone around when a Cyberman takes a walk? ©Steve Balon



Fantasy Empire artist Stuart Glazebrook as a Time Lord in the exhibition at Blackpool. ©Steve Balon



Stuart Glazebrook keeps the Doctor's greatest enemies covered—a Cyberman and a Dalek. ©Steve Balon



Zygons can be nice, it seems... ©Steve Balon



Despite all appearances Stuart Glazebrook (as a Robot of Death) isn't really trying to strangle Drog's wife... ©Steve Balon



Stuart Glazebrook holding up the fans at the exhibition. ©Steve Balon

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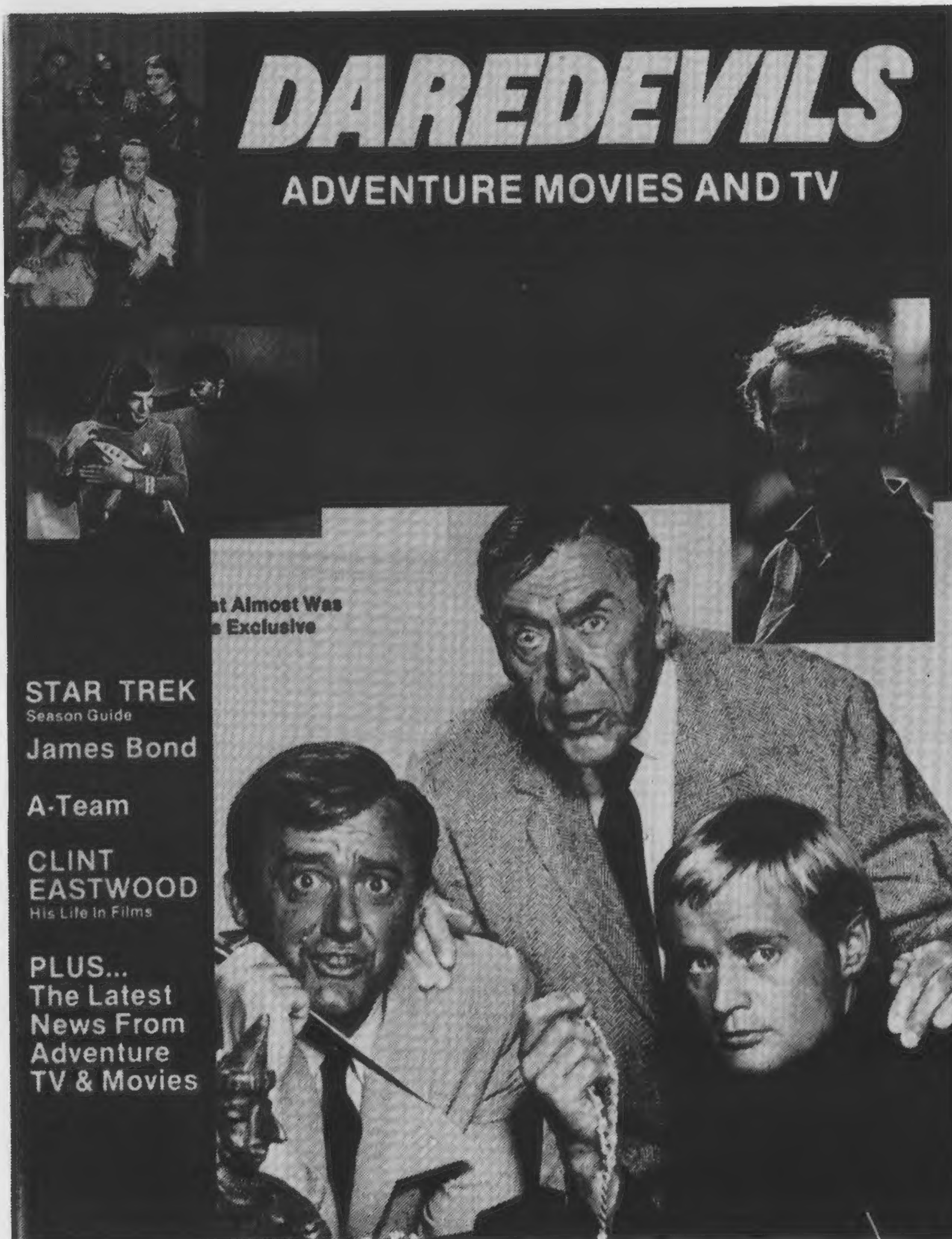
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